

Hafa Adai!

What's taking so long to repair PakPak Beach Park pavilions? **PAGE 2**

DOC officer demands jury trial in suit filed by inmate. **PAGE 5**

\$1

# Saipan Tribune

## Manta Ray's drill teams headed to nat'ls

The Manta Ray Battalion of Saipan Southern High School won first place overall in the Annual Drill Competition, with both of the school's Armed and Unarmed

### RELATED NEWS

■ SSSH's JLAB leadership team advances to nationals. **PAGE 7**

Drill teams being named the winners during an online ceremony last March 2.

Their victory means both team will represent the CNMI at the

Golden Bear National Drill Meet in Torrance, California, later this year.

The drill competition was held at Saipan Southern High School's

See **MANTA** on Page 4

The Manta Ray Battalion of Saipan Southern High School won first place overall in the Annual Drill Competition, with both of the school's Armed and Unarmed Drill teams being named the winners during an online ceremony last March 2.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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# Petition launched to save MSA

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
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REPORTER

A petition to save Marianas Southern Airways, as well as other airlines, was launched with the hope that enough signatures will encourage CNMI officials to sit down with these airlines to come to a resolution that will benefit the community as a whole.

With the recent decision by the administration to terminate the \$8-million sole-source

See **PETITION** on Page 4

### ONLINE PETITION:

■ <https://www.change.org/p/save-our-airlines-msa-asiana-others-fly-to-the-rota-saipan-tinian-guam-overseas>

## Cruise ship cancels port call

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
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REPORTER

The *Diamond Princess*, an

over 900-foot-long British-registered cruise ship, was supposed to visit Saipan last Saturday to make a port call

but windy weather changed those plans midstream, even as the ship was on its way to Saipan, resulting in the ship turning back.

*Saipan Tribune* visited the

port of Saipan early Saturday morning, in hopes of joining the welcoming group that was tasked with receiving over 1,000 passengers aboard the

See **SHIP** on Page 4

## Special committee on BOOST? When the need comes up—Villagomez

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
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REPORTER

House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) has yet to create a special committee to investigate the Torres administration's Building Optimism, Opportunity and

Stability Together, or BOOST Program, saying he will do so once the need comes up.

"When the need comes up, I will form a special committee to look into

See **BOOST** on Page 4



## 'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN

Days until  
'touchback rule'  
takes effect on  
Sept. 30, 2023:

**208**

## INSIDE



### LOCAL

Saipan Southern High School's JROTC Leadership Academic Bowl team has advanced to the nationals.

**PAGE 7**



### BUSINESS

Bourbon Street Bar and Café has lit up the heart of Garapan since opening last October.

**PAGE 11**



### WORLD

Residents are fleeing Bakhmut, as Ukraine troops may be preparing to withdraw from the city.

**PAGE 13**



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# Local

## What's taking so long to repair PakPak Beach Park pavilions?

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) has inquired from the Department of Public Works for an update about a project to repair Pakpak Beach Park pavilions in San Antonio, which was among the many community projects that were funded through a Saipan local law that has been in effect since 2019.

DeLeon Guerrero told DPW Technical Services Division director Anthony Camacho in an email last week that she is

hoping they all can get clear answers of when this Pakpak Beach Park pavilions repair project will be completed.

"We have waited too long," the Senate president told Camacho.

Last Feb. 27, Camacho told DeLeon Guerrero that the funds from Saipan Local Law 21-7 have been spent to repair the Dandan Baseball Field, basketball goals in Koblerville, and to repair/repaint the basketball court at the San Vicente Park.

Camacho said the fund

balance of \$103,000 were to be used for the repair of the Pakpak Beach Park pavilions, which DPW had already

produced the plans and specifications for bidding. About four months ago, he said, DPW initiated the bid advertisement and throughout the initial publication, DPW was notified by the Office of Grants Management

that they will take over those projects.

Camacho said that, according to the OGM, since other

funding sources (assuming federal funds) were available, they shall capitalize on that source before expending local funds.

He said they followed up with OGM, but DPW has not received a clear answer on how this project is progressing.

"We will continue our inquiry and if OGM will not proceed, we will initiate the bid advertisement," Camacho said.

DeLeon Guerrero first sought an update from DPW last Feb. 15 and followed it up last Feb. 24 after she was told

to check with Camacho.

House Local Bill 21-5, D1 appropriated \$126,670 of the Earned Income Interest Income for appropriation to repair, enhance, and maintain public facilities in Precinct 1. That bill later became Saipan Local Law 21-7.

In January 2022, DeLeon Guerrero urged then-DPW secretary James Ada to prioritize five remaining community projects that were funded through Saipan Local Law 21-7.

On Aug. 12, 2021, Ada informed DeLeon Guerrero that

one of the list of six funded projects under SLL 21-07 has already been completed. Ada was referring to the repair and maintenance of youth centers and basketball courts in Precinct 1.

The senator then stated in January 2022 that when the law took effect in September 2019, there are still five remaining projects: to repair the perimeter fence of the Dandan Softball Field; to construct pavilions and a restroom at the San Antonio Beach; for the repair and maintenance of

**See PAVILIONS on Page 4**

## CPA getting \$1.9M to rebuild commuter terminal access road

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority is receiving \$1.9 million in grant funds for the reconstruction of the commuter terminal access at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, while the CNMI's Division of Fish and Wildlife is getting \$3.4 million in grants funds for wildlife and sport fish conservation programs.

### » CNMI DFW is receiving \$3.4M in grant funds for conservation programs

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan disclosed in his *e-kilili* newsletter over the weekend that the Federal Aviation Administration announced last Monday that CPA is receiving \$1,900,000 in fiscal year 2023 Airport Program funding. Sablan said the grant funds will go toward the reconstruction of the commuter terminal ac-

cess road, including new signage and markings at the international airport.

With air traffic expected to reach or beat pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels this year, the FAA said it is awarding nearly \$1 billion from President Joseph Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to 99 airports of all shapes and sizes across

the country.

Sablan said the Airport Terminal Program, created by the U.S. Congress in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, provides \$1 billion annually for five years for airport terminal development projects that address the aging infrastructure of the nation's airports.

On \$3.4-million wildlife restoration, the delegate said the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service announced Friday that the Commonwealth Division of Fish and Wildlife is getting \$3,413,304 in fiscal year 2023 Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program grants.

Of that amount, DFW is receiving \$1,997,693 in wildlife restoration grant funds to support projects that restore, conserve, manage, and enhance wild birds and mammals and their habitat.

In addition, DFW is getting \$1,415,611 in sport fish restoration funds for restoration, conservation, and management of sport fish populations.

Sablan said the grant funds

are made available from revenues generated by the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Acts.

The delegate said when anglers, hunters, and boaters purchase equipment and fuel, the manufacturers and importers of those goods pay into the Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration and Boating trust funds.

These funds, he said, are then distributed to support wildlife agencies across the country to support local on-the-ground conservation programs.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced over \$1.6 billion in apportionments that support states, commonwealths, and territories in their efforts to connect people with nature and conserve fish, wildlife, and their habitats.



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## Conference teaches how to be a developmental disability advocate

By **CHRYSTAL MARINO**  
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CORRESPONDENT

As a part of this year's Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and to celebrate Advocates Day, several agencies gathered last Friday at the Saipan World Resort in Susupe to hold several educational activities intended to raise awareness and push for more widespread inclusion in the CNMI community.

The conference included activities from the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities and their Assistive

Technology Program, the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc., the Center for Living Independently in the CNMI, the CNMI Public School System, Division of Youth Services, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., Office of Vocational Rehabilitation CNMI, and the CNMI's Family to Family Health Information Center, as well as the Department of Labor.

The CNMI Council on Development Disabilities' Assistive

Technology Program held a "Build a No-to Low-Tech AT Device," where participants were given a brief overview of what no- or low-tech AT devices/equipment are allowed, and how to build at least two low-tech devices.

The Center for Living Independently also had their activities called "Self-care Bingo & Self-Advocate Bingo." The bingo game that consisted of words/phrases pertaining to self-care and self-advocacy, where consumers will interact with one another and mark each other's bingo cards.

The Division of Youth Ser-

vices showed participants the fundamentals of "Bead Making" and its cultural relevance in the CNMI.

There were also maternal, infant, child and adolescent health talks called "Trust Walk," intended to help participants develop great communication skills and listening skills, as well as trust.

NMPASI held activities that targeted to increasing public speaking and self-advocacy skills.

In accordance with the DDAM month, the office of the CNMI's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation's theme

is "Together, we can build a future." At the event, the CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation demonstrated to participants how an Individualized Plan for Employment, or IPE, is created and implemented. As part of the celebration, the Public School System's Special Education Program had hands-on activities targeting increasing family involvement.

In an almost therapy setting session, participants of the UCEDD Stress Management & Self Care Techniques had the opportunity to talk about stressful moments in their lives and how they coped with the event. Participants were

also provided techniques and hands-on activities to improve coping skills and enhance their quality of life. WIOA and the Department of Labor helped participants find what their main interest is and how they can connect that interest to a career. With so many sessions, the activities were split into five sessions among three groups, and were carried out throughout the day. The activities started early, from 7:30am and lasted until 3pm, and was held in both Saipan World Resort's ballroom and their Sunflower room.

The theme of this year's Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month is "Beyond the Conversation."

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA  
CHC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA  
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

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# Bwii Bwii’s and Artman ‘adopt’ Makaka Beach

By LEIGH GASES  
leigh\_gases@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The community is stepping up to the challenge of “adopting” and maintaining a place on Saipan, with Bwii Bwii’s Professional Lawn Care Services and Artman Environmental Corp. being the latest to take on the task, this time “adopting” the Maka-

ka Beach last Friday. The Saipan Mayor’s Office held an “Adopt-a-Place” ceremony at the beach located between the ABC Store/Joeten Hafa Adai Shopping Center and the Imperial Palace Saipan casino in Garapan. The occasion was attended by the Bwii Bwii’s Professional Lawn Care Services, Artman Environ-

mental Corp. manager Seungjun Park, several lawmakers, and other dignitaries, as well as Saipan Mayor’s Office staff. Brought about by Saipan Mayor Ramon “RB” Camacho’s effort to involve the community in the betterment of its villages, three places have so far been adopted all around Saipan.

## SHIP

From Page 1

*Diamond Princess.* Unfortunately, the port was empty, besides a few merchant vessels. Later, Commonwealth Ports Authority seaport manager Jerra Cing told *Saipan Tribune* that the *Diamond Princess* cancelled its visit to Saipan because of harsh weather conditions affecting passage into the Saipan lagoon. “Unfortunately, the *Diamond Princess* had to cancel due to strong winds and inclement weather,” she said. Cing said the notice was given to CPA at around 7:25am last Saturday morning, just a few minutes before the ship was scheduled to pull into the port of Saipan. This is not the first time that a scheduled stopover was cancelled at the last minute. Several years ago, a cruise ship was also forced to make a U-turn even as it was already within

sight of the Port of Saipan, also because of bad weather that made docking at the Port of Saipan hazardous. The visit’s cancellation also disappointed many of the island’s many businesses, which had readied themselves to man the welcome bandwagon. The *Diamond Princess* was initially supposed to make its port call on Saipan at around 8am Saturday and was scheduled to depart at around 6pm. The vessel, which is roughly 946 feet long and carried about 1,546 passengers and about 1,097 crew members, made a U-turn and headed straight for its next port call, Japan. The last-minute change in schedule was sad news for the island of Saipan as it was learned that many tourism stakeholders were excited to have an influx of visitors even if it was only for 10 hours. Prior to making its way to Saipan, the *Diamond Princess* made a port

stop in Guam where passengers were able to spend a whole day visiting famous tourist sites, trying some of Guam’s famous dining spots, and shopping. According to online sources, the *Diamond Princess* is a British-registered cruise ship owned and operated by Princess Cruises. The ship started operations back in March 2004 with its route around Asia during the northern hemisphere summer and then Australia during the southern hemisphere summer. Prior to visiting the Marianas, the cruise ship began its journey from San Diego, before making a port call in Hawaii, then making its way to the Marianas and now Japan. The *Diamond Princess* was built in Nagasaki, Japan, by Mitsubishi Industries and was refurbished back in 2019. The cruise ship was named “Best International Ship in Japan” according to a *Cruise Magazine’s* reader’s poll.

## BOOST

From Page 1

the BOOST issue,” said Villagomez yesterday in response to *Saipan Tribune’s* inquiry. The speaker did not comment further, saying “that’s all I have for now.” *Saipan Tribune* learned that, with the suspension of the BOOST Program, some of those who received some money through the program are not paying other vendors for program-related services. In an interview last January, Villagomez disclosed that he is looking at possibly appointing seven House members to a special committee that will be tasked with not so much redoing the 22<sup>nd</sup> House committees’ investigation in the BOOST Program, but possibly continuing where they left off. He said it doesn’t necessarily have to start from the House anymore; it can

start in the Senate. BOOST is a project of the previous Office of the Governor, the Department of Finance, and Department of Commerce that aimed to provide financial assistance to CNMI businesses and nonprofit organizations. Through BOOST, financial assistance was provided to local businesses and nonprofit organizations in the form of grants and business coaching through counseling and training programs. The previous 22<sup>nd</sup> House Ways and Means Committee and the Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee investigated the BOOST Program and recommended that further legislative investigation into the program is needed, and should continue in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Legislature. The current 23<sup>rd</sup> House JGO Committee, chaired by Rep. Marissa Flores (Ind-Saipan), has decided not to do so, saying the committee members agreed that it would not conduct

additional legislative hearings on the BOOST Program, given that several criminal investigations into the program has already been initiated. Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), who chairs the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law, had stated previously that she has no plans at this time for her committee to continue the oversight investigation into the BOOST Program. Babauta, who chaired the House JGO Committee that investigated the BOOST Program, said they have already provided all 4,000 pages of BOOST-related documents they received from their committee subpoenas to the Office of the Attorney General, Office of the Public Auditor, and appropriate law enforcement authorities. The Federal Bureau of Investigation seized several documents regarding BOOST from program administrator Bank of Saipan, which resulted in the suspension of the program.

## PETITION

From Page 1

contract with MSA; the Federal Aviation Administration’s recommendation that Star Marianas Air pay off what it owes the Commonwealth Ports Authority; and Asiana’s decision to suspend its Korea-Saipan service, members of the community have launched a petition in hopes of making their voices heard. A concerned CNMI resident, Abelina Mendiola, initiated the petition to save MSA, SMA, and Asiana in hopes of letting CNMI stakeholders know that the community would suffer in the event MSA

suspends its flights. “We rely on access to affordable, convenient, reliable, and safe air transportation between the islands of Guam, Rota, Saipan, and Tinian. We need travel to keep in close contact with loved ones, medical treatment, to bring fresh produce, for work. With two interisland airlines, Mariana Southern Airline and Star Marianas Air, we have choices. We just can’t afford to return to the times when Star Marianas Air suspended their services or even the risk of it happening again. In those times we were stranded and had no alternatives,” she said. As of press time, 840 individuals have already signed the petition.

According to Rosalinda Perje, an individual who signed the petition, she supports saving MSA as it provides the CNMI community with an affordable option. “As the economy is getting harder we need an affordable fare and MSA is a big help for some of us who travel for emergency or to visit our loved ones in Guam. MSA is helping the community be able to buy cheap fair for just a 40-minute travel time. I support MSA,” she said. If you are interested in signing the petition, you may visit: <https://www.change.org/p/save-our-airlines-msa-asiana-others-flyts-to-the-rotasaipan-tinian-guam-overseas>.

Benusto Lisua, owner of Bwii Bwii’s Professional Lawn Care Services, said on behalf of his business and Artman, “We want to extend our appreciation to the mayor’s office and to all the regulatory agencies involved with the [adopt-a-place] program. ...[It is] a great collaboration with Mr. [Seungjun]

Park, manager of Artman Environmental Corp. and a big thank you for your generosity in working with Bwii Bwii’s Professional Lawn Care Services.”

A longer version of this story is available at [www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com)

## MANTA

From Page 1

drill pad last Feb. 24, 2023, with both the Armed and Unarmed teams showcasing their inspection, regulation, color guard, and exhibition routines to evaluators from the Middle School Leadership Corps. Although the scores were not immediately announced, the results were shared during an online ceremony via Google Meet on March 2. “The drill team we have this year was excellent. They sacrificed so much of their time spending with their friends, loved ones, or significant others just to be here, to come and practice, to try and achieve a goal that we all strive to have; which is first place overall for both teams,” said cadet LTC Julius Torres. “Honestly, I think this year I had a good feeling that both teams would make it because of the time and effort that we put practicing and the amount of help that we’ve received.” He credits the assistance of CSM (ret.) Richard Basa, SGM (ret.) Joaquin Kiyoshi, MSG (ret.) Ronald Graham, and their new Army instructor, SFC (ret.) Deyna Sunderland, and the JROTC cadet alumni their success. Armed Team Regulation and Color Guard commander cadet CSM Anthony Villagomez said he’s quite happy for both teams “because we both worked really hard. And we’re making history here; both teams won, both teams are going to California, and I’m just excited to see the results of our hard work in nationals.” Cadet SFC Kiani Pangelinan, who

is a member of the Unarmed Drill team, said the competition “meant a lot to me because of all the hard work our teams put into it to get that first place trophy. The drill team is like a second family to me, so it felt amazing to be able to accomplish this win with them and overall. I’m just very proud of all of us.” Cadet 2LT Jaren Lifofoi, who is an Armed Drill team member, described the process as a journey, “with all of us contributing toward this, with the sacrifices we made throughout this whole process. This finally paid off. Both teams made it, both teams are first place, and both teams are going to Cali.” Another Armed Drill team member, cadet 2LT Antonio Cabrera, said, “It’s pretty exciting because both teams get to go to California to represent the CNMI. Despite all the challenges the team had within each other, and within their personal lives and everything, we all managed to come together as one and practice our hardest and get the No. 1 spot for all categories and No. 1 spot for first place overall.” Another Unarmed Drill team member, cadet 2LT Logan Mendiola, congratulates all the schools in the CNMI within the JROTC program. “Winning first place...means a lot and we couldn’t have done this without our commanders. We proved so many people wrong and will keep doing it, and we’ll keep pushing. Nothing would get in the middle of the road for us. Period.” Most of the winning cadets were first-time participants in this year’s competition. (PR)

## PAVILIONS

From Page 2

Pakpak Beach Park facilities; and for the architecture and engineering design of a sidewalk beginning at Coral Ocean Point to the intersection of Chalan Piao and Beach Road. On March 29, 2022, George Sablan of DPW TSD Accounting Section told DeLeon Guerrero that completed at the time are repair and repainting of basketball court at the San Vicente Central Park; repair of existing damaged basketball goals in Koblerville; and repair of the Dandan Softball Field Perimeter Fence. Sablan said the construction of pavilions at San Antonio Beach had been completed by Precinct 1 representatives. Sablan said the repair of the Dandan Children’s Park Basketball Court is estimated at \$15,000 and that they have solicited quotations to fix the basketball court boards so the youths can continue using the basketball facility while DPW architects are working on assessing the needed repairs. Sablan also disclosed that the repairs of the Pakpak Beach Park is

estimated at \$60,000 and that in-house design is being performed at this time. He said the fund balance of \$28,066 out of the \$103,066 will be used as a reserved/contingency for any anticipated change order for the two last projects—repair of the Dandan Children’s Park Basketball Court and repair of Pakpak Beach Park. On June 28, 2022, upon DeLeon Guerrero’s follow-up on the two last projects, Sablan said TSD is completing the assessment of the Dandan Children’s Park Basketball Court, and then will be soliciting proposals from contractors. He said TSD should have the proposals within a month. On the repair of Pakpak Beach, Sablan said the in-house design will be completed within a month, and that is when TSD architect can determine the estimated cost to complete the project. He said if the estimated cost is less than \$50,000, then TSD can solicit three proposals from contractors, and that will save them time from the actual bidding process. DeLeon Guerrero then made follow-ups on the remaining Pakpak Beach Pavilions repair last Feb. 15 and Feb. 24.



## DOC officer demands jury trial in suit filed by inmate

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
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REPORTER

One of the Department of Corrections officers facing a constitutional rights lawsuit filed

### Smiley Cafe & Playland is now a ProaPerks partner

Smiley Cafe & Playland is the latest company to sign on as a Northern Marianas College ProaPerks partner, joining many other businesses and organizations. All card-carrying members of the NMC ProaPerks program can now receive a 10% discount on all beverages on the menu.

The cafe is located at 5552 Isa Drive in Dandan. Their phone number is (670) 234-0888.

Smiley Cafe & Playland joins the growing list of ProaPerks partners. Companies and other interested organizations who would like to become part of the ProaPerks program and take advantage of the buying power of thousands of individuals that include NMC alumni, students, and employees, can find more information by emailing [proaperks@marianas.edu](mailto:proaperks@marianas.edu). (PR)

by an inmate has demanded that the court grant him a trial by jury in this case.

Following the court's recent decision to deny his bid to have the case dismissed, DOC officer Damien Deleon Guerrero has asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to grant him a trial by jury, "pursuant to Rule 38 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure," according to his counsel, assistant attorney general Carl Dela Cruz.

Chief Judge Ramona V.

Manglona previously denied Deleon Guerrero's motion to dismiss the charges filed against him by inmate Clifford J. Palacios.

Palacios is suing Deleon Guerrero, among other DOC officials, for allegedly violating his constitutional rights and negligence.

According to court documents, Palacios is suing DOC's Kelvin Simina and De Leon Guerrero for allegedly ordering that he be diverted back to DOC custody while

he was on his way to the Commonwealth Health Center following a brutal fight between him and another inmate.

By allegedly ordering that he be diverted back to DOC instead of allowing him to get treated at CHC, Palacios claims his constitutional rights were violated and DOC officers neglected their duty.

However, according to Deleon Guerrero's lawyer, Dela Cruz, his client should be dismissed from the lawsuit because even if the allegation are

considered true, the complaint fails to "plausibly suggest an entitlement to relief."

"This is because the complaint is devoid of any allegation that Damien's conduct amounted to a 'deprivation' within the meaning of the Constitution. Thus, the complaint on its face fails to make a plausible claim for relief and making dismissal of the complaint appropriate," said the lawyer.

Also, Dela Cruz argued that his client is entitled to immunity.

"While the issue before

the court involves important and often competing interests—the interest in protecting a pretrial detainee's 14th Amendment Due Process Clause rights and the interest in protecting public employees from 'disabling' suits—the plaintiff has utterly failed to plead sufficient facts to show that Damien deprived him of his Due Process Clause rights. Therefore, Damien is deserving of dismissal and should not bear the burden and costs of discovery and litigation on the basis of such deficient complaint," he said.

## Bayani donates to 7 cancer patients at PH National Children's Hospital

Seven children with cancer who are confined at the National Children's Hospital in the Philippines recently benefited from a donation from the Saipan-based Bayani Association.

The association donated \$2,400 to the seven pediatric cancer patients last Feb. 24, 2023, with the money raised during the Gandang Pinay beauty-pageant-for-a-cause, which the association held last Feb. 11, 2023, at the Saipan World Resort.

"The pageant was a huge success and it's time to give back," said Bayani Associa-

tion president Annamae Adaza. "We are thankful for the opportunity that the organization was able to help those children financially and, of course, to our 13 lovely candidates with their supportive parents, donors, sponsors, and volunteers."

The pageant was choreographed and directed by Ernie Molina.

The group also donated \$500 to a 1-year-old infant from Tinian who was recently diagnosed with a type of brain tumor in Hawaii and who continues to undergo treatment.

Before the pageant, the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Bayani Association members Erlinda Perez, Mary Ann Madriaga, National Children's Hospital chief Moriel D.J. Creencia, M.D., Marie Paz Meister, Medical Social Services head Remy Serapion, former DOH-PITAHC chief science research specialist Maria Teresa Mendoza, and Flordeliza Mabilin.

group was able to donate five wheelchairs to the Hemodialysis Unit of the Commonwealth

Healthcare Corpn.

The Bayani Association is a non-profit organization that

aims to help the community through projects and entertainment events. (PR)




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# Hyatt and DCCA kick off exhibit of CNMI female artists

By **CHRYSTAL MARINO**  
chrystal\_marino@saipantribune.com  
CORRESPONDENT

As a part of their celebration of Women's History/International Month, Hyatt Regency Saipan, in collaboration with the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, kicked off last Thursday their month-long special exhibit featuring resident female artists and their crafts at the resort hotel's lobby in Garapan.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony took place in the hotel's lobby, with several Hyatt Regency and DCCA staff, featured artists, their families, and several community members present. The special exhibit also ties in to the fact that March is the CNMI's Women's Month. The exhibit would continue weekly every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, from 10am to 6pm. On those days, featured artists will be showing off their crafts and artworks to Hyatt guests and visitors, and the items will be available for purchase.

Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture's folk arts coordinator Sepe Gloriana Teuira



thanked Hyatt and the members of the community during the ceremony. "...I hope that we can see you all come and support our artists, hope to see your customers learn from our artists, but most of all I hope we keep this collaboration going in the years to come."

Hyatt Regency Saipan general manager Simon Graf shared his excitement about the event and said that, although

Hyatt is an American franchise, the Hyatt Regency Saipan, which has a history of over 40 years on the island, deeply respects the islands' history and embraces the local culture. Graf said this exhibit is not only a way for artists to collect revenue, but more of a way to preserve their skillset and culture.

"The local community is a fundamental part of our business," said Graf, and, as part of

this community, Hyatt is happy to give this kind of platform for artists to exhibit their craft, not only for the community to view, but also for the tourists and guests from around the world. With these sort of exhibits as one of Hyatt's nonprofit engagements, Graf said they would not be collecting revenue to feature such artists.

Graf said the Hyatt art gallery is no new endeavor, but

features the work of local artists all year round. He said that if resident artists are interested in featuring their work in the gallery, they can contact the Hyatt Regency Saipan. For this edition, though, the number of artists to be featured have already been set. For this special edition, each artist would have their own "spotlight," as each exhibit will feature the art of four women at a time, and would rotate artists each time. The artists in this exhibit have been selected

Guests look through an artist's artwork at the ribbon-cutting ceremony that kick-started Hyatt's special exhibit featuring the art of local women creators at the Hyatt Regency Saipan in Garapan last Thursday.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

through DCCA.

One of Thursday's featured artists, Jadine Hocog, welcomes the opportunity that Hyatt is providing. "I think living on an island, it's really great to showcase our cultures through our crafts, through our practices, especially our demonstrations." Hocog said a lot of people often don't know what the CNMI culture is all about, but with these exhibits they can take little bits of knowledge based on what will be showcased or offered through art, or attire, etc.

Having been an artist since 2011, Hocog said that if she could encourage other new artists, she would tell them to get out there and showcase their talents. "You have a skill. You can create something beautiful and then share it with people. Whether showcasing it, or teaching people how to weave, or anything. Everybody has a talent; they just need to find that."

## Christmas in the Marianas supports art at SIS

Makerspace/Art Studio days with Amie McRoberts has become a huge hit at Saipan International School. Thursday and Fridays in art class are dedicated to Makerspace/Art Studio days. On these days, the students have the freedom to apply the skills and techniques they have learned throughout the year in art to create their own art. The Art Room is open to explore!

The students worked very hard to create decorations for Christmas in the Marianas Christmas tree and village this year. They knew any money that they would win would go back directly to the art studio. (Up to this point Makerspace/Art Studio days were mainly spent creating with donated recycled materials and donated building materials/toys.) The prize

money received went to buying Legos, magnetic tiles, marble run sets, paint pens, and so much more.

The students love challenging each other to build stronger and better marble courses or new creatures with the Legos. A new favorite is using the paint pens to paint on blocks to make the newest "Banana and Cherry phones"; they then can be seen walk-

ing around the room "taking pictures" on their new phones of their classmates' new creations.

The students have already started creating a new shopping list for next year's earnings. They all are so grateful for the donations from the Marianas Visitors Authority annual event and look forward to participating again next year. (PR)

## Vintage munitions to be blown up

The U.S. Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Detachment Marianas will be detonating World War II-era explosives at Saipan Marpi Blow Pit on March 10, 2023, from 11am to 1pm.

In line with this, the Marpi Road will be closed from 9am to 2pm for the duration of this

operation. This means that the Marpi Landfill, Banzai Cliff, Suicide Cliff, and Grotto will be closed for the duration of this operation.

Due to the danger imposed by these activities, the public is advised to stay away from these areas during the time and date indicated. (PR)

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**You may also pick up and submit an application form at:**  
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**For further information, call us at:**  
(670)237-5051 or (670)237-5046,  
Mon to Fri, 8:00 am to 5:00pm, except for holidays.

**DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES**  
**CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**INVITATION TO BID**  
**ITB23-TIQ-DCCA/DYS-42300035**

**SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 27, 2023 TIME: 09:00 A.M.**

## "Office Building/Space for DCCA, Division of Youth Services Tinian"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED ON THE MUNIS VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL (<https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/>) OR AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT HORIGUCHI BLDG, GROUND FLOOR, 123 KOPPA DI ORU & BEACH ROAD, GARAPAN, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

**QUESTIONS** REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO THE ACTING SECRETARY OF DCCA, VIVIAN T. SABLAN AT (670) 237-1003

**THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.**

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

**/S/ VIVIAN T. SABLAN**  
ACTING SECRETARY OF DCCA

**/S/ GERALDINE T. CRUZ**  
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.



# SSHS' JLAB leadership team advances to nationals

Saipan Southern High School's JROTC Leadership Academic Bowl team has advanced to the national championship level for the second time in a row, making this their third appearance at the nationals after going through two intense phases of online competition.

This year's JLAB leadership team—composed of cadet captain Malentino Amandus, cadet captain Shamira Sulyman, cadet captain Lana Sunderland, and cadet 2LT Shanna Villaluz—has qualified to compete at the 2023 National Leadership Bowl Championship in Washington, D.C., which will be held at the Catholic University of America campus this summer from June 18 to 22.

The cadets from Saipan Southern High School have

## Last chance to apply for graduate scholarship in Tokyo

There is one last chance to get information on a full scholarship in Global Environmental Studies at Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan. With a March 31 deadline to apply for admission and the scholarship, an online information briefing on March 17 is the last chance to learn about this scholarship for citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau and Republic of the Marshall Islands.

The scholarship will pay all expenses to earn a master's degree in Global Environmental Studies from Sophia University's Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies. The scholarship is offered by the university, the Association for Promotion of International Cooperation, a private foundation based in Tokyo, and the Micronesia Conservation Trust.

To find out more, join the information briefing online via Zoom on Friday, March 17, at the following times: 1pm in the Marshall Islands; 12pm in Kosrae, and Pohnpei; 11am in Chuuk, Yap; Guam and Saipan; and 10am in Palau and Japan.

The Zoom session:  
■ <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83626132429?pwd=Sms2MTNMcU1xYXVlaS0tN0tGYVBQWldzOj09>  
■ meeting ID: 836 2631 2429

■ passcode: 065976  
The deadline for applying for the scholarship is fast approaching, as is the deadline to apply to Sophia University. The master's degree in Global Environmental Studies is offered in English. Sophia University is ranked as one of the top research universities in Japan. (PR)



Saipan Southern High School's JROTC Leadership Academic Bowl team.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

proven their ability to overcome and succeed despite the obstacles these students have faced over the last three years.

This year's victory marks Saipan Southern High School's third time advancing to the championships to compete against 40 other high schools at the national championship level. It was during the 2021-2022 school year

when the Saipan Southern High Schools JLAB leadership team went to the national championships for the second time and won the Esprit de Corps Award. That secured for the Manta Ray Battalion its second Esprit de Corps Awards, the first one attained by the SSHS JLAB leadership team in 2016.

«I am so incredibly proud of my team for making it to

nationals! They put so much time and effort into their practices. Knowing that it all paid off makes me so happy,”

said an SSHS alumni, cadet major Mechaella De Ramos.

De Ramos was one of the cadets from last year's JLAB

leadership Team who made it to the national championships and is also the SSHS Manta Ray Battalion executive officer this school year. “With this being the second year in a row that our JLAB leadership team has made it to championships, I'm hoping that they can keep this new streak going.”

Saipan Southern High School's JROTC senior army instructor CSM (Ret.) Richard Basa said this year's JLAB leadership team deserves this honor. “I feel that it is well deserving once again, and it really is just amazing and is such a blessing that our JLAB leadership team won again. The team's hard work, dedication, and countless hours of study sessions have finally paid off. I am very proud of the cadets in the leadership team and as well as our academic team.” (PR)



## COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS (CNMI) Homeless Prevention Coalition

### GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE 03/06/23

The CNMI Homeless Prevention Coalition would like to give notice that it will be conducting its General Membership Meeting on March 7, 2023, 3:00 p.m. at the NMCADSV Conference Room MH1 First Floor in Puerto Rico and via Zoom Video Conferencing.

**Zoom Video Conference link information below:**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83127525331?pwd=NDhpcU1xYXVlaS0tN0tGYVBQWldzOj09>  
**Meeting ID:** 831 2752 5331  
**Passcode:** 128341

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact Jacob Muna at (670)234-6866/9447 or via email at [jjmuna@nmhc.gov.mp](mailto:jjmuna@nmhc.gov.mp).

## DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES CNMI GOVERNMENT INVITATION TO BID ITB23-RT-DCCA/DYS-42300033

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 27, 2023 TIME: 09:30 A.M.

### “Office Building/Space for DCCA, Division of Youth Services Rota”

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/S/ VIVIAN T. SABLAN  
ACTING SECRETARY OF DCCA

/S/ GERALDINE T. CRUZ  
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.



## COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION



### NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2023

THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PAID FOR BY NMHC WITH CPD FUNDS.

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, through the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is announcing the availability of an estimated \$1,576,020.00 in Community Planning and Development (CPD) funds available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. NMHC anticipates receiving an estimated amount of \$980,125.00 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); \$515,489.00 in Home Investment Partnerships (HOME); and, \$80,406.00 in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds for Program Year (PY) 2023.

The CDBG funds, authorized under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, may be used for a wide range of community development activities to revitalize neighborhoods, provide affordable housing, expand economic opportunities, and improve community facilities and services. However, use of these funds must meet at least one of the national objectives which include: 1) to benefit low and moderate-income families; 2) to eliminate slum or blight conditions; or 3) to meet other urgent community development needs.

The CDBG program requires a grant recipient to certify that it will minimize displacement of persons as a result of activities assisted with CDBG funds. The CNMI government does not plan on undertaking any activity which will cause displacement of person. In the event of any unforeseen displacement resulting from any CDBG funded activity, the CNMI government will comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, its implementing regulation and applicable local law.

HOME funds may be used to create affordable housing through financing assistance, site acquisition or improvement, and rehabilitating existing residential dwellings as well as providing funds for new construction or purchase of a single-family residential dwelling. Use of HOME funds must benefit low-income families.

ESG funds may be used to rehabilitate or convert to buildings into homeless shelters and for shelter operating expenses, supportive services and homeless prevention and rapid re-housing activities. Use of ESG funds must benefit the homeless.

**Applications for the use of CPD funds are available for pick up at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) located in Garapan, Saipan; San Jose Village, Tinian; and, Songsong Village, Rota, beginning December 19, 2022.**

**You may also obtain the application online at [www.nmhc.gov.net](http://www.nmhc.gov.net) in the section titled “Public Notice/Announcement” subsection “Community Planning Development”**

Applications must be submitted to the NMHC Offices in Garapan, Saipan (Saipan Residents); San Jose, Tinian (Tinian Residents); and, Songsong Village, Rota (Rota Residents) by **March 20, 2023, no later than 4:30 p.m. Applications submitted after March 20, 2023, will not be accepted.**

**A briefing will be conducted for interested applicants and for those applicants who have picked up an application for the use of CPD funds. The briefing will address the program requirements and regulations concerning the usage of CPD funds.**

**The schedules for briefing are as follows:**

**February 13, 2023, 6:00 p.m. for the island of Saipan**  
**February 14, 2023, 6:00 p.m. for the island of Tinian**  
**February 16, 2023 6:00 p.m. for the island of Rota**

**We are encouraging all non-profit, for profit, and government service providers who are providing services to people with disabilities, homeless individuals, and emergency shelter administrators and operators to attend this briefing.**

For residents living on the island of Saipan, the briefing will be held at the NMHC Office in Garapan; Residents living on the island of Tinian, the briefing will be held at the NMHC Office at the NMC Campus, Building A; and Residents living on the island of Rota, the briefing will be held at the Rota Mayor's Office Conference Room in Tatachog.

Accommodations for disabled individuals or other non-English speaking individuals who wish to attend the briefing are available upon request by giving at least 24 hours notice prior to the meeting so that such needs can be arranged and provided. Additional inquiries, concerning the CPD program, may be directed to Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner at 234-6866 or 234-9447.

/s/  
Jesse S. Palacios  
Corporate Director



# Opinion

Hafa Adai!

## Saipan Tribune

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### EDITORIAL

## It's hard to believe no one is responsible for hurting American diplomats in Cuba

**S**ome mysteries go unsolved, but who perpetrated the inhumane “brain attacks” in 2016 on 1,500 American diplomats stationed in Cuba and other parts of the world shouldn't be one of them.

It's hard to fathom that all these years after Americans were beset with headaches, dizziness, tinnitus and other symptoms, some of them permanent, the U.S. intelligence community concluded that the diplomats were unlikely to have been victims of attacks by a foreign enemy.

It's a wholly unsatisfying conclusion that seems to say we are no closer to being able to hold some bad actor accountable for the harm caused.

This week, after seven years and numerous investigations by different agencies—described as a “historic” effort—the U.S. intelligence community concluded that the complaints from U.S. personnel around the world since 2016 consistent with brain injuries or neurological illnesses were unlikely caused by covert acts of foreign adversaries. However, they don't know anything about who did it.

Seven intelligence agencies unanimously concluded that it was either unlikely or very unlikely that a foreign actor was responsible. And they now described the medical conditions caused as “anomalous health incidents.”

Really? Excuse us if we say, excuse us. So the U.S. government is saying there was nothing nefarious here. So it's all in the heads of the diplomats and their families?

The probe began because U.S. personnel in Cuba first reported nausea, intense head pressure and other symptoms. Some said they heard buzzing sounds in their homes or offices.

When first made public, it all sounded like a superpower with a super new weapon to stealthily debilitate people from afar.

Now, the intelligence community assessment, published on Wednesday, found evidence “consistently against” the involvement of foreign powers, the Miami Herald reported.

But while the agencies all but ruled out foreign actors, they stopped short of concluding what actually caused the symptoms or determining if the cases were even linked. “I think we have more confidence in what didn't happen than what did,” one intelligence official said.

Diplomats affected should be livid. Miami Republican Sen. Marco Rubio certainly is not buying this explanation and we agree with him.

Hours after the intelligence community report was revealed, Rubio, the vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, issued a statement “rejecting” the findings.

So they don't know the source but feel free to say that foreign agents are not to blame.

Is the Biden administration avoiding a solid finger at suspects like Cuba, Russia and China?

Rubio said just because intelligence agencies cannot conclusively link the associated “Havana syndrome” to any

See **HARD** on Page 9

WE WERE  
**RIGHT**  
ABOUT  
HUNTER'S  
LAPTOP!

WE WERE  
**RIGHT**  
ABOUT  
FALSE CLAIMS  
OF RUSSIAN  
COLLUSION!

WE WERE  
**RIGHT**  
ABOUT THE  
ORIGINS  
OF COVID!

SO WHEN ARE  
YOU GOING  
TO **STOP**  
CALLING US  
'CONSPIRACY  
THEORISTS'?

**THAT'S EXACTLY**  
WHAT AN EXTREMIST  
WHITE SUPREMACIST  
TRUMP SUPPORTER  
WOULD SAY!



## A one-China policy can be win-win for all

**T**weets and texts were popping all over the place on Wednesday. Not only were China's economic experts surprised—but their leaders were actually satisfied.

China's economy had just rebounded quite strongly, as the country reopened after its full-stop COVID shutdown. February's numbers showed China's manufacturing sector registered its largest growth in a decade.

So, this may be a good time to remind China's President Xi Jinping of something I warned him about just 15 months ago.

And way more importantly, this may be the perfect time to suggest that he consider a totally new way of approaching his ever-tense relations with that certain large island just off China's coast.

In December 2021, as Russia was menacingly massing troops near Ukraine's borders, I began a column by cautioning: “In his quest to make his country the undisputed leader of the global economy, China's President Xi Jinping can learn a lot from his next-door neighbor, Russia's President Vladimir Putin. Not about what to do, but about what not to do.”

As faithful readers may recall, I was one of many who warned that after Putin invaded that sovereign nation, he would soon be condemned as an international pariah.

Putin ordered his generals give each soldier invading Ukraine a book Putin authored, titled: “On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians.” It ended with the proud author's four words of inspiration: “We are one people.”

Then Putin sent his troops to commit blatant war crimes against those “one people”—by relentlessly bombing, blasting and otherwise slaughtering thousands upon thousands of those Ukrainian men, women, children, infants and elderly.

It is against that backdrop of immorality that China's President Xi has been having his troops send all sorts of militarily aggressive signals at ships and planes in international waters and airspace around Taiwan. China experts have been all a'witter on whether Xi really intends to invade and conquer the independent, self-governing island of Taiwan. Xi would probably ignite a massive multinational effort to defend Taiwan. He might win militarily. But he would become forever an international pariah—and he'd never be a leader of the global economy.

But Putin's book—from front cover to closing inspiration—gets us to the very thing we want to suggest to President Xi today. Beginning with Richard Nixon's opening of talks with Mao Zedong, and then Jimmy Carter's diplomatic relations pact with Deng Xiaoping, China, the United States

**By MARTIN SCHRAM**

Tribune News Service

*Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive. Readers may send him email at martin.schram@gmail.com.*



and yes, even Taiwan, all agreed to say there is just one China—and Taiwan is a part of it.

So now we have reached the point where we will make a proposal directly to the one individual who is clearly key to the fate of Taiwan and its population.

President Xi, your pal Putin may well have unintentionally given us the concept that could give you the essential successes you crave—without a wartime shot being fired. We aren't talking about Putin the iron-fisted autocrat, but Putin the author.

Here we must rewind to the creation of the one-China policy. We all know what that meant, in terms of land and governance. But essentially, one China can also be defined in terms of humanity. As that author wrote: “We are one people.”

China is, at its essence, one people—the people of China. They live on the mainland and they live on the island of Taiwan. Each governs its territory in its own way; but here too there can be a workaround.

Suppose, President Xi, you proposed that the people of China, living on the mainland and the island, agree that their representatives will sign a letter of understanding. Suppose that the letter provides that the Chinese people in both the mainland and on the island agree to have most favored national relations and exchanges on commercial trade, and also in all other matters: cultural exchanges, Olympic teams and even professional and collegiate sports teams, and so on.

And suppose that letter of understanding makes clear that, along with the free flowing trade and cultural exchanges among the Chinese people, no military or other organizations from either of these locations of the Chinese people will ever threaten, menace or attack the other.

Then, President Xi, you would be free to build toward your future leadership of the global economy.

What, here, is not to like?



## EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

## An obituary for Cinta Kaipat

By ANGELO VILLAGOMEZ  
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

*Obituaries on Saipan tend to focus on listing the recently deceased's parents, siblings, and other close relations, without providing much more information about a person's life. Maybe some day I'll write something about the deeper meaning in that, but today I'm mourning for my friend, Cinta. I want the world to know what she meant to me, and what she meant to our community. Although these things don't typically get written for our people, I'm breaking with convention and writing an obituary for my friend, Cinta.*

Cinta was born on Agrigan and grew up with a strong connection to her culture and heritage. She was a passionate and courageous advocate for indigenous Refaluwasch and Chamorro rights and environmental protection in the Northern Mariana Islands. She dedicated her life to fighting for justice, dignity, and sovereignty for her people and her land.

Cinta overcame social and economic obstacles and obtained her BA from DePaul University and her JD from the University of Minnesota Law School and became the first Refaluwasch woman ever to become a lawyer. She served as a lawmaker in the CNMI Legislature and was deputy secretary of Labor.

Cinta was not afraid to speak truth to power and to stand up for what she believed in. She was a fierce defender of human rights, cultural preservation, and ecological sustainability. She co-founded Pagan Watch, a grassroots organization that opposed the U.S. military's plans to use Pagan Island as a live-fire training range, and Beautify CNMI!, a coalition of concerned citizens, private groups, and government entities united to enhance the CNMI's natural beautify and foster community pride in its residents and visitors. She inspired many

**'...she made it your job to take care of our islands. And now that she is gone, it is left to us to carry on her legacy.'**



people with her vision, her wisdom, and her compassion.

Cinta was also a talented artist, songwriter, filmmaker, and author. She expressed her creativity and spirituality through various forms of art. She touched many lives with her kindness, generosity and humor. She was always ready to help others in need and to share her knowledge and experience. She loved her family, friends, and community deeply. She was a source of strength, hope, and joy for many.

Cinta would tell people, "You're already a member of Beautify CNMI!, even if you don't know it yet." It didn't matter if you were in elementary school, owned a business, or worked for the federal government, she made it your job to take care of our islands. And now that she is gone, it is left to us to carry on her legacy.

Cinta left us too soon, but she left us with courage, resilience, and love. She will always be remembered as an extraordinary woman who made a difference in this world. We will miss her dearly, but we will carry on her spirit in our hearts. May she rest in peace.

## Reflections, and regrets, 20 years after I opened DHS

This was my second draft notice. The first came from Richard Nixon in 1969 and took me to Southeast Asia. More than 30 years later came notice number two, this time from George W. Bush. The president called me to leave my post as Pennsylvania's governor to serve in the White House Office of Homeland Security. I accepted the call to duty, knowing full well the challenge that awaited.

Some people had cautioned me not to take on the assignment. They warned it would be impossible to succeed. I never saw it that way.

On Sept. 11, 2001, terrorists attacked our nation, a manifestation of evil. I wanted to join the effort to fight back. Led by President Bush, our nation responded to a nonpartisan call to protect our country from all future terrorist attacks. All options were on the table. During this remarkable time in our history, the blueprint for today's Department of Homeland Security was forged.

I will never forget going to Capitol Hill in April 2002 with draft legislation to create DHS. All four leaders of Congress, Republican and Democratic alike, greeted me and said they would get this done. In less than a year, legislation was enacted that constituted the largest reorganization of the federal government since the joint system of command was conceived by our former military leaders after World War II. Monumental change was called for, and the results have been a stronger and safer America.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security first opened its doors on March 1, 2003. In those early days, we referred to our colleagues as plank holders. Every detail of standing up the new department required tremendous attention to detail and effort. We had challenges with our facilities, our budget, and congressional jurisdictional issues. Even today, as I keep in touch with people in the department all these years later, they face many of the same challenges.

If I have one regret 20 years later, it is that America is still without a 21st-century immigration policy. This is not the fault of the department but lies with Congress and the many administrations that have come and gone—Republican and Democratic alike. DHS oversees America's immigration system, yet it does so with one hand tied behind its back. Our nation remains un-

## By TOM RIDGE

The Philadelphia Inquirer

*Tom Ridge, a twice-elected Republican governor of Pennsylvania, served as the first secretary of Homeland Security. This was written for The Philadelphia Inquirer.*



able to establish a modern and sustainable immigration policy because we have yet to find a way to deal with illegal immigration at the southern border.

Both parties hold strong views on key components of immigration policy. Hidden behind pointed rhetoric and outsize political posturing is the critical need to fashion an immigration policy that secures the southern border, shows compassion to "Dreamers," builds a foreign worker entry and exit system, provides H-2B visa cap relief, and resolves the fate of those who, while entering illegally, have been lawful and contributing residents. I have been pleading for such changes for more than 20 years now. It is well past time to govern.

As I have stayed in close contact with my successors and many of the men and women I served with originally at DHS, what has never changed is the department's total commitment to protecting our citizens. I can say confidently that the dedication of the public servants at DHS, with all of the pressures of a still-young agency, is unmatched in our federal government.

DHS remains the epicenter of so many of our nation's most difficult security and political challenges, and yet, the men and women of DHS continue to serve our country with integrity and without complaint. I am blessed to have served with our nation's best, and I know that today's DHS workers continue the tradition of selfless service to our nation.

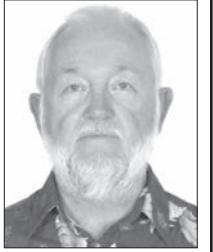
I reach this 20-year anniversary with optimism that our department will continue to protect us from terrorists, help us recover from the challenges of nature, and deal smartly and compassionately with immigration, despite the lack of a cohesive road map.

## March Right In To My March Write In

## LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY CONNOLLY

Special to the Saipan Tribune



*Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.*

The following two poems were printed in the *Saipan Tribune* on March 9, 2018. My inspiration was a poem called Jade Flower Palace written by Chinese Tang Dynasty poet Tu Fu (712 -770). The title alone got me thinking about then POTUS 45's derogatory remarks about the White House in Washington, D.C. where American presidents reside when they are in office. President Trump called the White House "a dump." Most Americans revere the edifice and are proud of its residents. Five years later POTUS 45 continues his malice, lying, and continued delusional denial of losing the election to POTUS 46, Joseph Biden. He now operates from his golf course resort in Mar-a-Lago, Florida.

## White House 'Dump' Malice

The Potomoc river is frozen in place  
Congressional movement follows suit.  
Political hacks hound government investigators.  
Instead of Making America Great Again  
45 and his cronies spend their time  
making America hate government institutions  
and disregard aspects of our Constitution.  
A majority of the nation is disgusted  
with the attacks on the DOJ and FBI  
alt-right attempts to distract the nation  
from directions the Russian probes are heading.  
Thousands of tweets and emails pile up in reports.  
A journalistic media storm sweeps the nation as  
more women claim Donald caused them distress  
some are paid for silence about the mess.  
His golden toilet fixtures and many mirrors  
remain in the hoity toity New York white tower.  
Florida fields with greens, tees, and high fees  
hear his club whacks and tweety putt putts.  
Protests are held across the nation in city after city.  
The horror and shame of the current presidency  
slips into future world historical archives  
Who can say what the next three years will bring.

## A to Z News: It Ain't News it's Zero News

It A in't news but B ad and C yber D umb  
news E merging F ake news G ood news  
H ealthy I ntelligent news and J erky news  
K knockout L oony M orning news about  
N ews O pen and shut P honey baloney  
Q uoted news R eal news S tupid news T alk  
show news U nderground V iews news  
W elcome news X - rated news Y our news  
and Z ero absolute Z ero news ! You choose.  
(That's whassup, it's a wrap up,

## HARD

From Page 8






"Something happened here and just because you don't have all the answers doesn't mean it didn't happen. I will not accept that all these reported cases are just coincidences, and I will continue to work on this issue until we receive real explanations," Rubio said after the Senate Intelligence Committee on Wednesday.

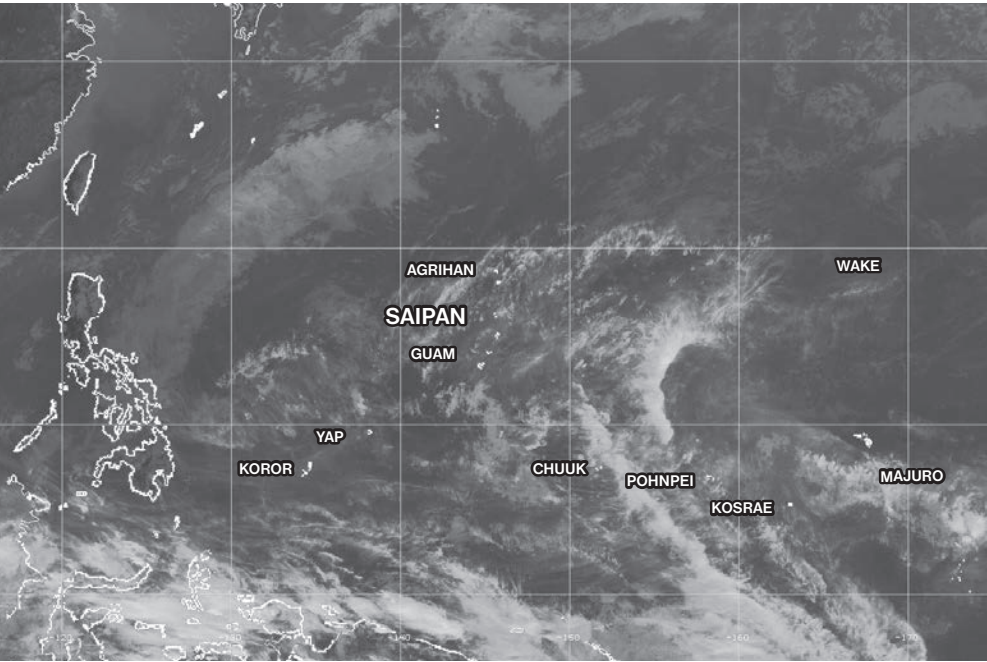
Rubio, a staunch critic of Cuba and all communist countries, said that his panel would continue its independent review of "Havana syndrome" reports and take steps to ensure that foreign service officers who have been affected receive comprehensive care. In 2021, the U.S. Senate passed a bill to compensate victims of the attacks.

We commend Rubio for not allowing these reprehensible attacks on U.S. personnel abroad to be swept under the rug.



# The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
									
Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny		Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny		Partly sunny		Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny	
85°	78°	85°	78°	85°	78°	86°	78°	86°	78°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



**PICTURE TIME: 8:01 AM, SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2023**

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery showed isolated showers over the Marianas this morning. Northeast trade-winds also prevail over the local area.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: [www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/)

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Scattered Thunderstorms	85° / 77°	
Palau	Partly Cloudy	83° / 75°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°	
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 81°	
Pohnpei	Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Kosrae	Isolated Thunderstorms	85° / 81°	
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	84° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:31 AM	6:25 PM
Tuesday	6:30 AM	6:25 PM
Wednesday	6:30 AM	6:25 PM
Thursday	6:29 AM	6:26 PM
Friday	6:28 AM	6:26 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	5:42 AM	5:27 PM
Tuesday	-	6:19 AM	6:16 PM
Wednesday	-	6:54 AM	7:04 PM
Thursday	-	7:29 AM	7:51 PM
Friday	-	8:04 AM	8:41 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	72° / 59°	
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	72° / 37°	
Hong Kong	Sunny	70° / 62°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	79° / 70°	
London	Showers	47° / 35°	
Los Angeles	Showers	57° / 44°	
Manila	Mostly Sunny	87° / 72°	
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	76° / 58°	
Miami	Sunny	83° / 70°	
New York	Mostly Sunny	54° / 38°	
Osaka	Sunny	59° / 40°	
Paris	Cloudy	46° / 38°	
Busan	Sunny	62° / 46°	
Rome	Showers	59° / 46°	
Salem	Sunny	77° / 52°	
San Francisco	Showers	51° / 43°	
Seoul	Sunny	59° / 40°	
Tokyo	Showers	56° / 43°	
Washington, DC	Sunny	61° / 36°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
1:18 AM	Low Tide	-0.11	
8:06 AM	High Tide	1.64	
1:41 PM	Low Tide	0.88	
6:51 PM	High Tide	1.68	

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:30AM	7:25AM	Daily	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA189	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	6:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW9308	3:50AM	7:20AM	4, 7	TW307	8:45PM	2:15AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	TW9307	9:20PM	2:50AM+1	3, 6
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)							

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS					
INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 6, 2023					
SAIPAN TO TINIAN			TINIAN TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:20 A.M.	11:38 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	12:00 P.M.	12:18 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
3:40 P.M.	3:58 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	4:20 P.M.	4:38 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
9:40 A.M.	9:58 A.M.	6,7	10:20 A.M.	10:38 A.M.	6,7
SAIPAN TO ROTA			ROTA TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:20 A.M.	8:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	10:20 A.M.	11:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5:00 P.M.	5:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	6:00 P.M.	6:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:40 A.M.	8:20 A.M.	6,7	8:40 A.M.	9:20 A.M.	6,7
3:00 P.M.	3:40 P.M.	6,7	4:00 P.M.	4:40 P.M.	6,7
SAIPAN TO GUAM			GUAM TO SAIPAN		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
12:00 P.M.	1:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1:30 P.M.	2:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2:00 P.M.	3:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	5:30 P.M.	6:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:00 P.M.	8:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	9:00 P.M.	10:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
11:00 A.M.	12:00 P.M.	6,7	12:30 P.M.	1:30 P.M.	6,7
5:00 P.M.	6:00 P.M.	6,7	6:30 P.M.	7:30 P.M.	6,7
ROTA TO GUAM			GUAM TO ROTA		
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
8:20 A.M.	8:55 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	9:25 A.M.	10:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
4:25 P.M.	5:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	3:30 P.M.	4:05 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7)					

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.			
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022			
SAIPAN TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily
SAIPAN TO TINIAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: [editor@saipantribune.com](mailto:editor@saipantribune.com). Website:[www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com).

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: [sales@saipantribune.com](mailto:sales@saipantribune.com)



# Business

## Lunch specials, delivery available at Bourbon Street Bar and Café

By LEIGH GASES

leigh\_gases@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Since its grand opening last October, Bourbon Street Bar and Café has lit up the heart of Garapan with its live bands during the weekend and comedy/different themed nights.

This time for lunch, they are ramping up their menu with specials to fill everyone's gut with delicious food—and if you don't have time to dine in, they got you covered with their delivery service available this week.

For their specials, you can choose from not just two or three items, but from several hearty and delicious meals that come complete with the soup of the day and iced tea.

Bar co-owner Eden Ordas said this is their way of serving the community of foodies with more options and variety, as well as ensuring there is always something to choose from for those picky eaters.

From Monday to Wednesday from 11am to 2pm, you can choose from their baked salmon in kimchi base with shrimp and rice pilaf for \$15.45.

If pasta is on your palette, try out their pomodoro with bread toast and spicy shrimp for \$14.95; or try their pork and liver steak for \$14.50; for those burger lovers, try out their bacon cheeseburger for only \$12.99; if you're really hungry, dine on their 8-oz an-



LEIGH GASES

Chicken inasal is now available in the lunch specials menu from Thursday through Saturday at Bourbon Street Bar and Cafe in Garapan.

gus beef top sirloin steak for just \$18.95.

From Thursday to Saturday, for those who miss the chicken inasal from the Philippines, or are just chicken lovers, try out their version which will have your craving for more for just \$15.45. Inasal is chicken marinated in a mixture of calamansi, pepper, coconut vinegar and annatto, then grilled while basted with the marinade.

Or, try out their peperoncino with bread toast and spicy shrimp for \$14.95; and for your other burger fix, try out their swiss mushroom melt

burger for \$12.95.

If you are unable to dine in due to a short lunch break or just feel like ordering in, order from their extensive menu and have them deliver for a fee. For those in Garapan, Navy Hill, Puerto Rico, Lower Base, Gualo Rai, San Jose, and Susupe will be charged a \$5 delivery fee; villages outside mentioned areas will be charged an additional fee.

Call (67) 233-0415 to place your order and have it delivered right at your doorstep.

Aside from their specials, they also serve alcohol, cof-



LEIGH GASES

Bourbon Street Bar and Cafe is located in Garapan next to Bravo Restaurant now serves lunch specials below \$20 and soon will offer delivery.

fee, à la carte menu items such as pastas, pizza, steaks, burgers, local favorites, appetizers, and chasers.

Bourbon Street Bar and Café is located at the corner of Beach Road and Cpl. Derence Jack St. and is open for lunch from 11am to 2pm and from 5pm to 10pm for dinner.

Bourbon Street Bar and Café embodies the party vibe of Bourbon Street in New



LEIGH GASES

Get lit at Bourbon Street Bar and Cafe as you drink, dine, and be merry while you listen to the live band and entertainment or try out their lunch specials under \$20.

Orleans, Louisiana, which is known for its colorful lights, music, entertainment, alcohol, and huge crowds.



### CNMI DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



## PUBLIC NOTICE

The CNMI Department of Commerce, Central Statistics Division is preparing to conduct the CNMI 2023 Prevailing Wage Study (PWS) survey to begin on March 01, 2023 and notifies all businesses and employers in the CNMI to log on to the CSD Data Collection Portal and complete the PWS survey questionnaire.

All businesses and employers (Private & Public), with and with no employees, are urged to complete this survey before March 15, 2023.

Data Collection Portal Link:  
<http://cnmidata.commerce.gov.mp>

Name: QUAYLA JEAN F. TAITANO  
AND JERRY J. SAMMY  
Address: Saipan, MP 96950  
Phone: (670) 783-0771 / (670) 785-2323  
Pro Se

#### IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re the Matter of the •  
Petition to Appoint •  
General Guardianship • FCD GU  
for: • CIVIL ACTION  
R.M.L.F. • NO. 22-0173  
Minor Child • ORDER  
By: • SHORTENING  
QUAYLA JEAN F. • TIME AND  
TAITANO and • NOTICE OF  
JERRY J. SAMMY, • HEARING  
Petitioners •

GOOD CAUSE APPEARING, it is hereby ordered that the time for notice of hearing for Petitioner/Respondent's petition be shortened and that the hearing be set on March 8, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom.

Dated this 28th day of February, 2023.

/s/  
Judge



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS  
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION  
Tel. (670) 234-6866/234-9447/234-7689/234-7670 -  
Fax. (670) 234-9021 | Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

*This ad is paid for by NMHC funds*

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) had been allocated funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) thorough Section 3205 of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2) for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) to provide homelessness assistance and supportive services.

The HUD program requires the NMHC to develop an allocation plan for HOME ARP funding allocation and to solicit from the general public comments on the allocation plan.

The public hearing is scheduled for March 09, 2023, 6:00 p.m. at the NMHC Main Office Conference Room located in Garapan, Saipan. Individuals needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance.

Copies of the Allocation Plan is available on the NMHC website at [www.nmhc.gov.net](http://www.nmhc.gov.net) by clicking on the "HOME-ARP Plan" tab. Written comments can be submitted via email to Mr. Christopher B. Pangelinan, Mortgage & Credit Division Manager at [mcdmanager@nmhc.gov.net](mailto:mcdmanager@nmhc.gov.net). Written comments are due on March 21, 2023, no later than 4:00 p.m.

For more information, please contact Mr. Christopher B. Pangelinan at (670)234-6866/9447 or via email at [mcdmanager@nmhc.gov.net](mailto:mcdmanager@nmhc.gov.net).

/S/ JESSE S. PALACIOS



# Nation

## How Biden leaves wiggle room to opt against reelection bid

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden exudes confidence as the next race for the White House approaches.

During last month's State of the Union address, he lured unruly Republicans into agreeing with him that federal entitlements should be protected. He's intensified travel outside Washington, trumpeting job-creation in Wisconsin and steep federal health care spending to Florida seniors while touting a trillion-dollar public works package that he says can do everything from revitalize Baltimore's port to easing train tunnel congestion under the Hudson River.

And he used spy-thriller tactics to sweep into war-scarred Ukraine.

For most presidents, these are powerful elements to include as the centerpiece of a reelection campaign—pledging to protect people and the economy at home and democracy in the heart of Europe. But, with the famously fickle 80-year-old Biden stopping short of officially declaring his 2024 candidacy, he's leaving just enough room to back out of a race and focus instead on using such moves to cement his legacy.

"I look at Biden from the outside, as a historian, and say, 'Boy, if he stepped away now, his place in history is secure and extraordinarily positive,'" said Jeffrey Engel, director of the Center for Presidential History at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. "That's how a normal person thinks about these things. That's not



President Joe Biden delivers his State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress at the Capitol, Feb. 7, 2023, in Washington.

how a president thinks about these things."

Those close to Biden insist he's not legacy shopping and that he will announce a campaign, likely after the first quarter campaign fundraising period ends this month. The party has cleared a path for Biden's renomination with rivals from his left, including Sens. Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, pledging to support the president's reelection.

Bestselling self-help author Marianne Williamson is formally launching a primary challenge to Biden on Saturday that's largely being shrugged off by the party.

The Democratic National Committee has unanimously expressed "our full and com-

plete support" for Biden's reelection. Party leaders aren't planning primary debates, arguing there's no longer enough time to even build out a debate schedule that would pit Biden against Williamson or anyone else.

In an interview last week with The Associated Press, first lady Jill Biden said there was "pretty much" nothing left for the president to do but pick a time and place to announce his reelection bid.

"How many times does he have to say it for you to believe it?" she asked.

Still, there are signals that even if the prevailing assumption among most Democrats is that Biden will seek another term, the decision isn't yet final. Even Jill Biden was more

muted in subsequent interviews when assessing her husband's political future.

"It's Joe's decision," she told CNN, noting that she's personally "all for it."

"If he's in, we're there," she added. "If he wants to do something else, we're there too."

After the AP interview, the president joked to ABC that he needed to call his wife "to find out" if he was running again.

His intention "has been from the beginning to run," the president told the network. "But there's too many other things we have to finish in the near term before I start a campaign."

While Biden's standing among Democratic officials is solid, actual voters seem more wary. A recent poll from the AP-NORC Center for Public

### Doctor: Lesion removed from Biden's chest was cancerous

WASHINGTON (AP)—A skin lesion removed from President Joe Biden's chest last month was a basal cell carcinoma—a common form of skin cancer—his doctor said Friday, adding that no further treatment was required.

Dr. Kevin O'Connor, the White House doctor who has served as Biden's longtime physician, said "all cancerous tissue was successfully removed" during the president's routine physical on Feb. 16. Biden, 80, was deemed by O'Connor to be "healthy, vigorous" and "fit" to handle his White House responsibilities during that physical exam, which comes as he is weeks away from launching an expected bid for reelection in 2024.

O'Connor said the site of the removal on Biden's chest has "healed nicely" and the president will continue regular skin screenings as part of his routine health plan.

Basal cells are among the most common and easily treated forms of cancer — especially when caught early. O'Connor said they

don't tend to spread like other cancers, but could grow in size, which is why they are removed.

Biden had "several localized non-melanoma skin cancers" removed from his body before he started his presidency, O'Connor said in his Feb. 16 summary of the president's health, noting it was well established that Biden spent a lot of time in the sun during his youth.

First lady Jill Biden in January had two basal cell lesions removed from her right eye and chest.

She said in an Associated Press interview last week that she's now "extra careful" about sunscreen, especially when she's at the beach.

Basal cell carcinoma is a slow-growing cancer that usually is confined to the surface of skin—doctors almost always can remove it all with a shallow incision—and seldom causes serious complications or becomes life-threatening.

The Bidens have long been advocates for fighting cancer. Their adult son Beau died in 2015 from brain cancer.

Affairs Research found just 37% of Democrats want Biden to seek a second term, down from 52% in the weeks before last year's midterm elections.

Biden's age has been a lead-

ing concern since the early days of his first campaign. Already the oldest president in U.S. history, he'd be 86 by the end of a second term, should he win one.

## Storms roll east after slamming South; 10 deaths reported

By KEN MILLER and STEFANIE DAZIO  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

A large storm system took aim at the Northeast on Friday, threatening heavy snow and coastal flooding after heavy winds and possible tornadoes damaged homes and buildings, left thousands without power and caused 10 deaths in a wide swath of the South and Midwest.

Three people were killed by falling trees in Alabama as severe weather swept through the state. In Mississippi, a woman died inside her SUV after a rotted tree branch struck her vehicle, and in Arkansas a man drowned after he drove into high floodwaters. News outlets reported two people died in Tennessee when trees fell on them.

Three weather-related deaths also were reported in Kentucky in three different counties as storms with straight-line winds moved

through the state. Gov. Andy Beshear had declared a state of emergency before the storm and on Friday evening the mayor of Louisville, Craig Greenberg, followed suit because of the severe storms, high winds, widespread damage and danger to lives and property.

"I encourage everyone in our community to exercise extreme caution this evening, and in the coming days — do not drive through standing water, do not approach downed power lines, or do anything that would put the lives of anyone at risk," Greenberg said in a Facebook post.

The National Weather Service in Louisville called the storm Friday "powerful and historic" with peak wind gusts between 60-80 mph (96-128 kph).

More than a million utility customers in Kentucky, Tennessee and Michigan were without power Friday evening,

according to poweroutage.us.

The storm barreled Friday afternoon into the Detroit area, quickly covering streets and roads beneath a layer of snow. The weather service said some areas could see blizzard conditions with snowfall approaching 3 inches (8 centimeters) per hour. The Detroit Metropolitan Airport closed Friday evening because of rapidly deteriorating weather conditions.

Detroit-based DTE Energy reported more than 130,000 customers lost power Friday evening. It was the latest slap after ice storms last week left more than 600,000 homes and businesses without power.

The National Weather Service reported poor road conditions and numerous vehicle crashes across much of north-west Indiana because of heavy snowfall Friday afternoon.

The storm system was turning toward New England, where a mix of snow, sleet and rain was expected to start

Friday night and last into Saturday, prompting the National Weather Service to issue a winter storm warning.

There's a chance of coastal flooding in Massachusetts and Rhode Island and the storm could bring as much as 18 inches (45 centimeters) of snow to parts of New Hampshire and Maine. The storm will also bring strong winds that could cause power outages.

Airport officials in Portland, Maine, canceled several flights for Saturday ahead of the weather and some libraries and businesses in the region announced weekend closures. Still, with warmer weather expected to return by the end of the weekend, most New Englanders were taking the storm in stride.

It wasn't the same story in California, where the weather system slammed the state earlier in the week with as much as 10 feet (3 meters) of snow. Some residents in mountains east of Los Angeles will likely

remain stranded in their homes for at least another week after the snowfall proved too much to handle for most plows.

Many residents of Alabama, Louisiana, Kentucky, Arkansas and Texas emerged Friday to find their homes and businesses damaged and trees toppled by the reported tornadoes. Tens of thousands were without power and some were also without water.

In Alabama, a 70-year-old man sitting in his truck in Talledega County was killed when a tree fell onto his vehicle. A 43-year-old man in Lauderdale County and a man in Huntsville also were killed by falling trees Friday, local authorities said.

In Texas, winds brought down trees, ripped the roof off a grocery store in Little Elm, north of Dallas, and overturned four 18-wheelers along. Minor injuries were reported, police said.

Winds of nearly 80 mph (130 kph) were recorded near the Fort Worth suburb of Blue

Mound. The roof of an apartment building in the suburb of Hurst was blown away, resident Michael Roberts told KDFW-TV.

"The whole building started shaking. ... The whole ceiling is gone," Roberts said. "It got really crazy."

Heavy rain was also reported in southern Missouri and northern Arkansas, causing flooding in both states.

In southwest Arkansas, Betty Andrews told KSLA-TV that she and her husband took shelter in the bathroom of their mobile home while a tornado moved through.

"It was very scary. I opened the front door to look out and saw it coming. I grabbed Kevin and went and got into the bathtub," Andrews said. "We hunkered down, and I said some prayers until it passed."

They were OK but the home sustained major damage and the couple was temporarily trapped in the bathroom until a neighbor cleared debris from outside the door.



# Asia

## China: Defense boost to meet 'complex security challenges'

**BELJING** (AP)—Increases in China's defense budget have been "appropriate and reasonable" and are aimed at meeting "complex security challenges," a spokesperson for the country's rubber-stamp parliament said Saturday.

Wang Chao gave no indication of whether the rate of increase to be announced Sunday at the opening of the National People's Congress's annual session would be above or below last year's 7.1%.

But he said the defense budget has remained stable as a share of GDP and that China's military modernization "will not be a threat to any country."

"On the contrary, it will only be a positive force for safeguarding regional stability and world peace," Wang told reporters at a news conference.

"The increase in defense spending is needed for meeting the complex security challenges and for China to fulfill its responsibilities as a major country," he said.

"China's defense spending ... is lower than the world average and the increase is

appropriate and reasonable," Wang said.

China spent 1.7% of GDP on its military in 2021, according to the World Bank, while the U.S., with its massive overseas obligations, spent a relatively high 3.5%.

China budgeted 1.45 trillion yuan (then \$229 billion) for last year — roughly double the figure from 2013. Consistent annual increases for more than two decades have allowed the 2 million-member People's Liberation Army to increase its capabilities across all categories.

Along with the world's biggest standing army, China has the world's largest navy and recently launched its third aircraft carrier. It boasts a massive stockpile of missiles, along with stealth aircraft, bombers capable of delivering nuclear weapons, advanced surface ships and nuclear powered submarines.

China has already established one foreign military base in the Horn of Africa nation of Djibouti and is refurbishing Cambodia's Ream Naval Base that could give

it at least a semi-permanent presence on the Gulf of Thailand facing the disputed South China Sea.

The modernization effort has prompted concerns among the U.S. and its allies, particularly over Taiwan, the self-governing island democracy that China claims as its territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary.

That has prompted a steady flow of weapons sales to the island, including ground systems, air defense missiles and F-16 fighters. Taiwan itself recently extended mandatory military service from four months to one year and has been revitalizing its own defense industries, including building submarines for the first time.

Although no longer increasing at the double-digit annual percentage rates of past decades, China's defense spending has remained relatively high despite skyrocketing levels of government debt and an economy that grew last year at its second-lowest level in at least four decades.

## US, S. Korea announce largest field exercises in 5 years

**SEOUL, South Korea** (AP)—The South Korean and U.S. militaries announced Friday they will hold their biggest joint field exercises in five years later this month, as the U.S. flew a long-range B-1B bomber to the Korean Peninsula in a show of force against North Korea.

The North has threatened to take "unprecedentedly" strong action against such exercises. It's likely that it will respond to the upcoming training with missile tests because it views it as an invasion rehearsal.

In a joint news conference, the South Korean and U.S. militaries said they will conduct the Freedom Shield exercise, a computer-simulated command post training, from March 13 to 23 to strengthen their defense and response capabilities, and separate large-scale joint field training exercises called Warrior Shield FTX.

Col. Isaac L. Taylor, a spokesperson for the U.S. military, said the field training will include a combined amphibious drill and that their size would return to the scale of the allies' earlier biggest springtime field exercises called Foal Eagle.

The two countries last conducted Foal Eagle in 2018. They then canceled or down-

sized some combined drills to support now-stalled diplomacy with North Korea and guard against the COVID-19 pandemic. Recently, however, the two countries have been expanding their joint military exercises in the face of an evolving North Korean nuclear threat.

Friday's deployment of a U.S. B-1B was the aircraft's first such flyover in joint aerial training with South Korean warplanes since Feb. 19. North Korea is highly sensitive to the deployment of B-1Bs, which are capable of carrying a large conventional weapons payload. It responded to the previous flights of multiple B-1Bs by test-launching two short-range missiles the next day.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said the use of a B-1B demonstrated the U.S. determination and ability to use the full range of its military capabilities, including nuclear, to defend its allies.

North Korea test-fired more than 70 missiles last year, the most ever in a single year, and several more this year. Many of the missiles were nuclear-capable weapons designed to strike the U.S. mainland and South Korea.

North Korea has also threatened to use its nuclear weapons

preemptively in potential conflicts with the United States and South Korea. The U.S. military has warned it that the use of nuclear weapons "will result in the end of that regime."

In January, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the U.S. would also increase its deployment of advanced weapons such as fighter jets and bombers to the Korean Peninsula.

Last month, North Korea's Foreign Ministry warned that the U.S. and South Korea would face "unprecedentedly persistent and strong counteractions" if they carry out planned military drills this year that the North regards as "preparations for an aggression war."

Later, Senior North Korean Foreign Ministry official Kwon Jong Gun said the only way to reduce military tensions on the Korean Peninsula is for the United States to reverse its plans to deploy strategic assets in South Korea and halt joint drills with the South. He said if the United States continues its "hostile and provocative practices" against North Korea, it can be regarded as a declaration of war.

North Korea has previously issued similar rhetoric in times of animosity with the United States and South Korea.

# World

## Civilians flee embattled town as Ukrainian pullout looms



Tetiana Hurieieva, the mother of Volodymyr Hurieiev, a Ukrainian soldier killed in the Bakhmut area, receives the flag that draped his coffin, during the funeral in Boryspil, Ukraine, Saturday, March 4, 2023.

**KHROMOVE, Ukraine** (AP)—Pressure from Russian forces mounted Saturday on Ukrainians hunkered down in Bakhmut, as residents attempted to flee with help from troops who Western analysts say may be preparing to withdraw from the key eastern stronghold.

A woman was killed and two men were badly wounded by shelling while trying to cross a makeshift bridge out of the city in Donetsk province, according to Ukrainian troops who were assisting them.

A Ukrainian army representative who asked not to be named for operational reasons told The Associated Press that it was now too dangerous for civilians to leave Bakhmut by vehicle and that people had to

flee on foot instead.

Bakhmut has for months been a prime target of Moscow's grinding eastern offensive in the war, with Russian troops, including forces from the private Wagner Group, inching ever closer.

An AP team near Bakhmut on Saturday saw a pontoon bridge set up by Ukrainian soldiers to help the few remaining residents reach the nearby village of Khromove. Later they saw at least five houses on fire as a result of attacks in Khromove.

Ukrainian units over the past 36 hours destroyed two key bridges just outside Bakhmut, including one linking it to the nearby town of Chasiv Yar along the last remaining Ukrainian resup-

ply route, according to U.K. military intelligence officials and other Western analysts.

The U.K. defense ministry said in the latest of its regular Twitter updates that the destruction of the bridges came as Russian fighters made further inroads into Bakhmut's northern suburbs.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, assessed late on Friday that Kyiv's actions may point to a looming pullout from parts of the city. It said Ukrainian troops may "conduct a limited and controlled withdrawal from particularly difficult sections of eastern Bakhmut," while seeking to inhibit Russian movement there and limit exit routes to the west.

### WORLD BRIEFS

#### UN nuclear head says Iran pledges more access for inspectors

**VIENNA** (AP)—The head of the U.N.'s nuclear agency said Saturday that Iran pledged to restore cameras and other monitoring equipment at its nuclear sites and to allow more inspections at a facility where particles of uranium enriched to near weapons-grade were recently detected. But a joint statement issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency and Iran's nuclear body only gave vague assurances that Tehran would address longstanding complaints about the access it gives the watchdog's inspectors to its disputed nuclear program. IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi met with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and other top officials in Tehran earlier Saturday. "Over the past few

months, there was a reduction in some of the monitoring activities" related to cameras and other equipment "which were not operating," Grossi told reporters upon his return to Vienna.

#### Climate activists target art work near German parliament

**BERLIN** (AP)—Climate activists on Saturday splashed a dark liquid over an artwork near the German parliament building engraved with key articles from the country's constitution, drawing condemnation from the speaker of parliament and other lawmakers. The Last Generation group said supporters symbolically "soaked in 'oil'" the outdoor installation—a series of glass plates on which 19 articles from the German Constitution setting out fundamental

rights are engraved. They pasted posters over the work that read, "Oil or fundamental rights?" The group said in a statement that "the German government is not protecting our fundamental rights" and argued that continuing to burn oil is incompatible with doing so. Parliament Speaker Bärbel Bas said she was appalled by the action and has "no understanding for it." She said the work by Israeli artist Dani Karavan, titled "Grundgesetz 49" after the German name of the post-World War II constitution and the year when it was drawn up, is a reminder to respect and protect rights such as freedom of expression and assembly. "Those are the fundamental rights on which the demonstrators from Last Generation themselves base the justification for their actions," Bas said in a statement.



# Health & Wellness

## WHO: Half of world will be obese by 2035

By EVAN ROSEN  
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

**H**alf the world will be overweight by 2035, a health group warns.

The World Obesity Federation predicts over 4 billion people will be obese if preventive measures are not implemented, BBC News reported Thursday.

The findings show that overweight rates are rising fastest among kids, and that low to middle-income countries in Africa and Asia will undergo the starkest changes.

Those countries, the report explains, have dietary preferences which trend towards more highly-processed foods, in addition to increased levels of sedentary behavior, weaker policies on food supply and marketing. Healthcare services are lacking, too.

"Governments and policymakers around the world need to do all they



The World Obesity Federation predicts over 4 billion people will be obese if preventive measures are not implemented, BBC News reported Thursday. DREAMSTIME/TNS

can to avoid passing health, social and economic costs on to the younger generation," said Prof. Louise Baur, president of the World Obesity Federation.

The rises in obesity rates across the globe is also projected to cost roughly \$4 trillion per year by 2035.

The report also acknowledges that the economic impact of obesity "is in no way a reflection of blame on people living with obesity."

The data published in the report will be presented to the United Nations next week.

### MAYO CLINIC MINUTE

## Who should be screened for colorectal cancer?

By DEB BALZER  
MAYO CLINIC NEWS NETWORK

**C**olorectal cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and the Multi-Society Task Force on colon cancer encourage patients to start screening at age 50 unless they have other risk factors like family history or inflammatory diseases that could predispose them to colon cancer. However, African Americans may consider getting screened at an earlier age. Dr. John Kisiel, a Mayo Clinic gastroenterologist, explains who is at risk.

Men are more likely than women

to get colorectal cancer and there are other high-risk groups, says Mayo Clinic's Dr. John Kisiel.

"African Americans are often diagnosed with either more advanced disease or may have more aggressive disease when they are diagnosed, and that's matched stage for stage."

Dr. Kisiel says patients should start screening at age 50, but adds there is more encouragement for African Americans to maybe start screening at age 45.

Other risk factors may include family history, inherited syndromes, obesity, diabetes, smoking, diet and age.

"It is a condition that is most commonly diagnosed around age 67, but the risk continues to advance with age."

Dr. Kisiel advocates for regular screening. He says if the disease is diagnosed early, it is highly treatable. If it's diagnosed later, it's less likely curable.

"Colon cancer has been called the most fatal, yet most preventable, disease."

For those uncomfortable with a colonoscopy or a stool-based test, Dr. Kisiel offers this: "Colon cancer can kill you. Embarrassment will not."

## We've had 25 million flu cases in 2023. Will we see a second wave?

By HUNTER BOYCE  
THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

**A**s of Feb. 24, Atlanta's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated 25 million illnesses, 280,000 hospitalizations and 18,000 deaths from the flu this season. With that in mind, the CDC also reported that influenza activity is low nationwide as of Feb. 18. The virus certainly made an impact this year, but cases are now dwindling.

According to Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, a second wave of flu cases is still possible for 2023 but not expected.

"It's not unusual to see an influenza B resurgence after the big A peak, but we've really seen no evidence of that so far," Dr. Osterholm told Becker's Hospital Review.

CDC domestic influenza surveillance team leader Alicia Budd added that "whether activity will increase again just cannot be predicted."

According to the CDC's flu forecast, which predicts upcoming flu cases across the country, the U.S. should expect somewhere from a couple hundred to a few thousands new flu cases by the end of this week.

"This week's ensemble predicts that the number of new weekly confirmed influenza hospital admissions will remain stable or have an uncertain trend nationally, with 240 to 3,400 new confirmed influenza hospital admissions likely reported in the week ending March 4, 2023," the CDC reported.

The CDC places much of the health care industry's success at battling the flu this year on the effectiveness of this season's vaccines.

"According to data from the New Vaccine Surveillance Network (NVSN), VE against the predominant H3N2 viruses was 45% among children, which is higher than seen previously for this virus," a Feb. 2023 CDC report explained. "To compare, during previous seasons, VE against H3N2 has been around 30%. The higher VE this season is likely because flu vaccination elicited good immunity against the variety of viruses circulating. Flu vaccine effectiveness against circulating influenza A(H1N1) viruses was 56%."

The CDC continues to recommend that everyone six months old or older get an annual flu vaccine, as "the majority of influenza viruses tested are in the same genetic subclade as and antigenically similar to the influenza viruses included in this season's influenza vaccine."

### ON NUTRITION

## Kicking off National Nutrition Month with a quiz

By BARBARA INTERMILL  
Tribune News Service

Barbara Intermill is a registered dietitian nutritionist and syndicated columnist. She is the author of *Quinn-Essential Nutrition: The Uncomplicated Science of Eating*. Email her at [barbara@quinessentialnutrition.com](mailto:barbara@quinessentialnutrition.com).

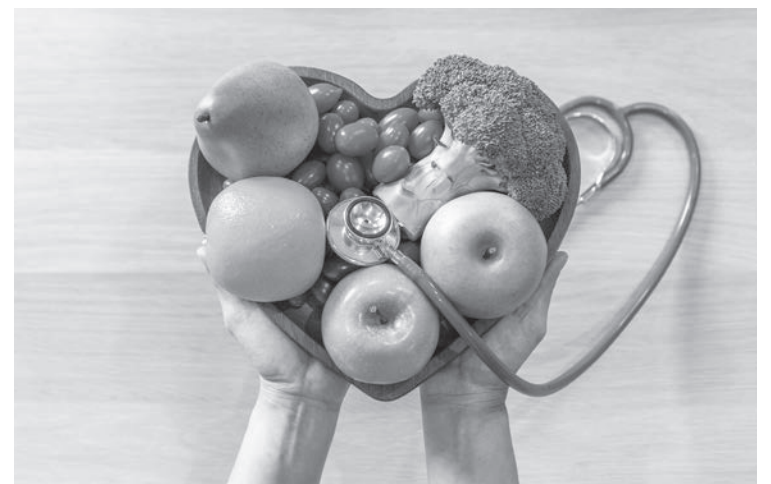


**I**'m always happy to say goodbye to February and move into warmer days of March ... hopefully. March is also National Nutrition Month, an annual campaign created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics 50 years ago. I also like to answer readers' questions during this month.

Yep. Nuts, seeds and butters made from them are part of the protein food group.

6. Three daily cups of dairy foods is currently recommended for older children and adults.

Fact. A general recommendation for children ages 9 and older as well as adults is to consume three cups of



March is National Nutrition Month, an annual campaign created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. DREAMSTIME/TNS

But first, let's kick off the month with a nutrition quiz, adapted from resources by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics ([www.eat-right.org](http://www.eat-right.org)).

### Fact or fiction?

1. Most Americans get enough dietary fiber.

Fiction. Research shows that most of us do not eat enough fruits, vegetables, whole grains and nuts—plant-based foods that supply dietary fiber.

2. Frozen vegetables and fruits can be as nutritious as fresh produce.

Fact. Many commercial fruits and veggies are frozen right after they have been picked, retaining important nutrients. Look for varieties that have no added sugars, sodium or saturated fat.

3. Wheat bread is considered a whole grain.

Fiction. Wheat bread is not the same as whole wheat bread. Look for the words "whole wheat," "whole oats" or "whole grain" as the first or second ingredient on the food label.

4. Fish and seafood provide important nutrients.

You bet they do—most notably immune builders protein and zinc, blood-building iron and omega-3 fatty acids, which fight inflammation.

5. Nuts and seeds count as plant-based proteins.

dairy per day. This includes low-fat varieties of milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese, or calcium-fortified soy milk or soy yogurt.

7. You have to do planned exercises to meet current physical activity goals.

Fiction. All types of activity (moving arms, legs or both) are considered beneficial and count toward physical activity. Americans are encouraged to move more during the day and to aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week. Sixty minutes or more daily is recommended for school-age children (play counts!).

8. It's unhealthy to snack between meals.

Not necessarily. Snacking on healthful foods can help manage hunger between meals (fruit and nuts, anyone?). The key is to plan what you are going to eat in advance rather than waiting until you are hungry to choose a snack.

9. Fruits and vegetables provide vitamins and minerals that support a strong immune system.

That's a fact. Fruits and vegetables contain a variety of vitamins and minerals that support immune health, including vitamins A and C.

10. No nutrition question is too dumb.

Fact. Send me what's on your mind and I will include as many as space allows this month.



# Life & Style

## Chris Rock to finally have his say in new stand-up special

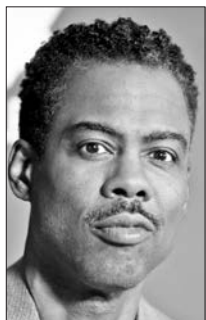
By JAKE COYLE  
AP FILM WRITER

A year after Will Smith smacked him on the Academy Awards stage, Chris Rock is poised to finally have his say.

The 58-year-old comedian on Saturday night will perform his first stand-up special since last year's Oscars. He's doing it in "Chris Rock: Selective Outrage," streaming live on Netflix at 10 p.m. EST. Not only will Rock present about an hour of stand-up from the

Hippodrome Theatre in Baltimore, but Netflix—in its first ever live show—will book-end the special with star-studded commentary.

The pre-show, beginning at 9:30 p.m., will feature Paul McCartney, Jerry Seinfeld, Matthew McConaughey, Cedric the Entertainer, Ice-T and two hosts



Rock

from last year's Oscars: Wanda Sykes and Amy Schumer. Afterward Rock's set, Dana Carvey and David Spade will host guests including Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Arsenio Hall and JB Smoove.

While Smith has apologized and repeatedly spoken about the incident since last March, Rock has avoided

all the usual platforms where celebrities often go to air their feelings. He never sat down with Oprah Winfrey, and turned away the many media outlets that would have loved to land an exclusive in-depth interview.

Instead, Rock has for much of the past year been touring new material in a long string of performances as part of his Ego Death tour. The shows, which had been announced before the 2022 Oscars, have featured performances with Dave Chapelle and Kevin Hart.

On the road, Rock has often worked in jokes and reflections on the slap, though it's never been more than an element of his shows. There's no guarantee that he will talk it about Saturday night, but he's widely expected to and has long suggested this would be his chosen forum.

Rock first broke his public silence about the slap three nights after the Oscar ceremony, last year in Boston. "How was your weekend?" he asked the crowd. He added that he was "still kind of processing what happened."

Now, after plenty of processing, Rock will be taking the cultural spotlight just a week before the March 12 Oscars, where the slap is sure to be revisited by this year's host, Jimmy Kimmel. In the aftermath of last year's events, Smith resigned his membership to the film academy. The academy board of governors banned Smith from the Oscars and all other academy events for a decade.

At the annual luncheon for nominees held last month, motion picture academy president Janet Yang voiced regret about how the incident was handled,

calling the academy's response "inadequate." Bill Kramer, the academy's chief executive, has said the academy has since instituted a crisis communications team to prepare for and more rapidly respond to the unexpected.

"Selective Outrage" is Rock's second special for Netflix, following 2018's "Tamborine." They're part of a two-special \$40 million deal Rock signed with the streamer in 2016.

While rivals have gotten into live streaming and sports, "Selective Outrage" marks Netflix's first foray into live programming. Netflix, with 231 million global subscribers, also recently signed on to stream next year's Screen Actors Guild Awards, signaling that "Selective Outrage" may be just the start of a new trend.

## Tom Sizemore, 'Saving Private Ryan' actor, dies at 61

BURBANK, Calif.

(AP)—Tom Sizemore, the "Saving Private Ryan" actor whose bright 1990s star burned out under the weight of his own domestic violence and drug convictions, died Friday at age 61.



Sizemore

The actor had suffered a brain aneurysm on Feb. 18 at his home in Los Angeles. He died in his sleep Friday at a hospital in Burbank, California, his manager Charles Lago said.

Sizemore became a star with acclaimed appearances in "Natural Born Killers" and the cult-classic crime thriller "Heat." But serious substance dependency, abuse allegations and multiple run-ins with the law devastated his career, left him homeless and sent him to jail.

As the global #MeToo movement wave crested in late 2017, Sizemore was also accused of groping an 11-year-old Utah girl on set in 2003.

He called the allegations "highly disturbing," saying he would never inappropriately touch a child. Charges were not filed.

Despite the raft of legal trouble, Sizemore had scores of steady film and television credits—though his career never regained its onetime momentum. Aside from "Black Hawk Down" and "Pearl Harbor," most of his 21st century roles came in low-budget, little-seen productions where he continued to play the gruff, tough guys he became famous for portraying.

"I was a guy who'd come from very little and risen to the top. I'd had the multimillion-dollar house, the Porsche, the restaurant I partially owned with Robert De Niro," the Detroit-born Sizemore wrote in his 2013 memoir, "By Some Miracle I Made It Out of There." "And now I had absolutely

nothing."

The book's title was taken from a line uttered by his character in "Saving Private Ryan," a role for which he garnered Oscar buzz. But he wrote that success turned him into a "spoiled movie star," an "arrogant fool" and eventually "a hope-to-die addict."

He racked up a string of domestic violence arrests. Sizemore was married once, to actor Maeve Quinlan, and was arrested on suspicion of beating her in 1997. While the charges were dropped, the couple divorced in 1999.

Sizemore was convicted of abusing ex-girlfriend Heidi Fleiss in 2003—the same year he pleaded no contest and avoided trial in a separate abuse case—and sentenced to jail. The former Hollywood madam testified that he had punched her in the jaw at a Beverly Hills hotel, and beaten her in New York to the point where they couldn't attend the "Black Hawk Down" premiere.

## Israel says inscription in Persian pottery shard inauthentic

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israel acknowledged on Friday that an inscription in clay found in the country's south bearing the name of Darius the Great, ruler of the ancient Persian Empire, was not authentic.

The shard of pottery in question was discovered by a passerby last December and caused a sensation as the first mention of sixth century B.C. empire builder to appear in Israel.

After the news broke earlier this week, an expert in ancient Aramaic inscriptions approached the Israel Antiquities Authority to explain that she herself had actually etched those words onto the ancient fragment.

The unnamed expert, part of a foreign expedition last summer to the Tel Lachish archaeological site, told officials that she had scratched the words into pottery as a demonstration while explaining to students how artifacts were historically inscribed.

She said that she then left the altered piece at the site where a Canaanite city once stood, about 25 miles (40 kilometers) southwest of Jerusalem, the Antiquities Authority said.

Authorities said they determined the misidentification of the artifact had come about "unintentionally and without malice" but described the expert's decision to leave behind the newly inscribed

shard as "careless." The piece of pottery was examined in labs and found to be ancient, creating confusion.

Gideon Avni, the chief scientist of the Antiquities Authority, said it "takes full responsibility for the unfortunate event."

"In terms of ethical and scientific practices, we see this as a very severe occurrence," he said, noting that such cases remain extremely rare.

The authority said it will conduct a review of all procedures and policies at foreign expeditions nationwide. It was not immediately clear if any action would be taken against the unnamed expert behind the inscription.

## Man wants to avoid contact entirely with son's in-laws

**DEAR ABBY:** My husband and I have a son, daughter-in-law and grandson. We moved from another city to be closer to them and be part of their lives. The problem is, my husband dislikes our daughter-in-law's parents. He refuses to spend holidays or attend other activities where both sets of parents will be.

I don't think the other parents or my daughter-in-law are aware of his dislike. This leaves me feeling extremely sad and not knowing what to do. I feel this is his problem and not mine. I have no issues with the other parents. I feel I should be able to attend my grandson's activities without him. There are times when we visit our son and his family alone, so that works out well.

Neither our son nor our daughter-in-law knows how he feels, and I can't say anything for fear that it will cause hurt feelings, especially for my daughter-in-law, whom I love very much. Please advise.

**MOM IN THE MIDDLE**

**DEAR MOM:** Relationships can be complicated. Not all families meld easily. It's regrettable, but it's also a fact. While it would be nice if your husband would be willing to make an effort to control his distaste so he could be included in more get-togethers, he has made it clear that he isn't. Continue visiting with your son,

**DIL and in-laws when the opportunity arises. Let your husband "have other plans, be busy," etc. If your son or DIL asks why your husband is absent so often, tell them to ask HIM.**

■■■■■

**DEAR ABBY:** I am a male reader who was in a physically and emotionally abusive relationship for a number of years. I believed, as I was told repeatedly, that there was no hope of freeing myself and that I was stuck in that situation for the rest of my life.

I am here today to say THIS IS NOT TRUE. It was just another manipulative lie from my abuser. I broke free, made a new life for myself and I am happy! I'm back in touch with old friends and family I hadn't been allowed to contact. I now have a healthy, nurturing relationship.

Please, Abby, tell your readers if they are experiencing abuse and feel stuck, to believe in themselves. They CAN have their lives back. They should reach out and not feel embarrassed. They can make this happen. Please pass along my message.

**FREE AT LAST**

**DEAR FREE:** Congratulations on reclaiming your life. As your letter illustrates, partner abuse can happen regardless of gender. Although the focus is usually on

## DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN  
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



women, abuse also happens to men, straight and gay. The abuse can be physical, emotional or both.

An organization I have mentioned in this column before is Stop Abuse For Everyone (SAFE). It's a support resource for abused individuals, regardless of age, race, gender or sexual orientation. Readers, to learn more about SAFE, visit [stopabuseforeveryone.org](http://stopabuseforeveryone.org).

■■■■■

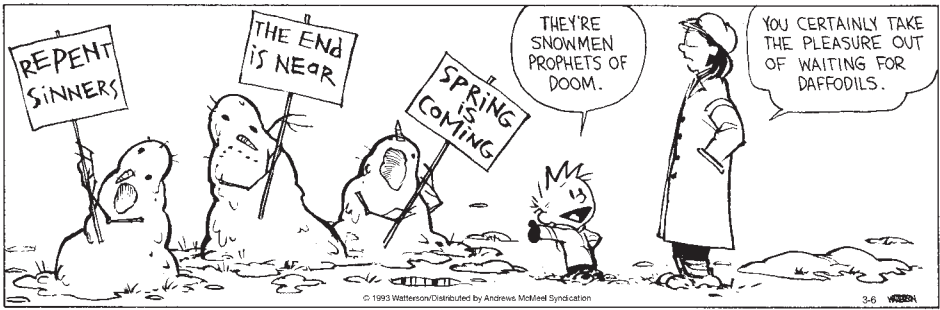
Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)



Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



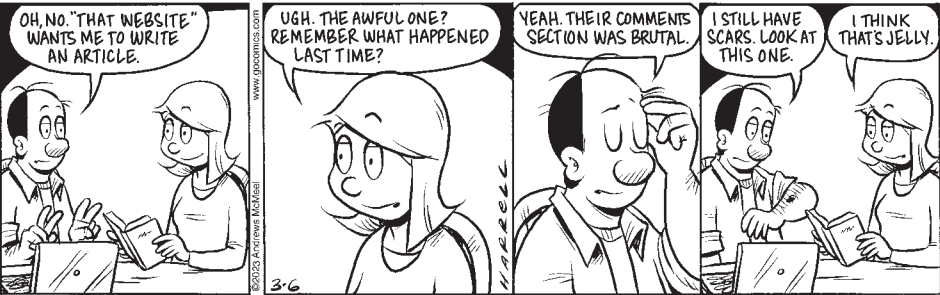
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Wager 4 Kate's sitcom partner 9 Small ammo 12 Actress Thurman 13 Pano-rama 14 Feedbag tidbit 15 Fashion-able shops 17 Swiss canton 18 Vichy water 19 More Grinch-like 21 Argue 24 Fat 25 "Strange Magic" gp. 26 Where Lux. is 28 Grade A 31 Pal 33 Capek play 35 "Just the two —" 36 Metric measures

DOWN 1 Fella 2 Moody rock 3 Sigma follower 4 Emulate Earhart 5 Cordial 6 Baton Rouge sch. 7 Things 8 Relax 9 Aplenty 10 Expose 11 Swizzle 16 Afternoon social 20 Prefix with dynamic 21 Pack of cards 22 K thru 12 23 Wide street 27 Pirate's potato 29 Stubborn beast 30 Noble Italian family 32 Relocate 34 Neighbor of Hungary 37 Neighbor of Hungary 39 Thoreau's pond 42 "Span-glish" star Téa 44 Semi-nary subj. 45 Assess 46 Alike (Fr.) 50 German con-junction 51 CBS logo 52 Minivan alternative 53 Hotel amenity

Solution time: 26 mins.

Last Friday's Answer 03/06

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:

Shaquille O'Neal, 51; Connie Britton, 56; D.L. Hughley, 60; Rob Reiner, 76.

**Happy Birthday:** You'll see situations from a different perspective this year. Mull over all possibilities before you make a move. Address how you use your skills and earn your living. Make updates that keep you motivated to learn and stay ahead of any competition you encounter. Don't hold back if something bothers you, or you'll get stuck in a no-win situation. Your numbers are 6, 13, 24, 29, 31, 37, 45.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** Simplify, declutter and ease stress. Rethink how you live and how you deal with money, health and legal matters, and you will find it easier to reach your goals. Expand your interests to include a healthy fitness routine. \*\*\*

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** Mix and mingle with people in your field. Share information; someone heading down a similar path will show interest. Joining forces, sharing expenses and bouncing ideas back and forth will pay off. Invest in yourself and promote what you have to offer. \*\*\*\*\*

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Proceed with your plans. When you launch your objective, you'll find solace in the response you receive. An opportunity to reach out or help someone in need will touch you emotionally and give you a reason to give back to your community. \*\*

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** Call in favors, ask questions, gather information and offer a proposal that's hard to refuse. A simple yet classic approach will help others grasp what you are trying to achieve and

see how and what they can contribute in return. \*\*\*\*

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Money matters, contracts and health issues will require prompt attention. Refuse to let the emotional input you receive push you to make a move you aren't ready to pursue. Spend more time putting things in place to ensure you reach your target. \*\*\*

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** An emotional incident will lead you in a different direction. Don't get angry if someone doesn't want to tag along. What you learn from the experience will help you expand your plans. Scan details and adjust anything that might slow you down. \*\*\*

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** Pay attention to what truly matters. Refuse to let situations run amok with someone you love or are close to for social or professional reasons. Focus on helping, your appearance and your love life. A creative endeavor will ease stress. \*\*\*

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Give a unique spin to something you love to do. The personal changes you make will help you move forward. What you do to physically change your look or surroundings will impact those watching from the sideline. \*\*\*\*\*

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** Don't be fooled by what others do or say. If you are gullible, someone will take advantage of you or make decisions for you. Spend more time on self-improvement and setting high standards. Partner with someone who will meet you halfway. \*\*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Do your part, live up to your promises and don't criticize others. Make a change at home that encourages you to add to your skills and keep up with trends. Embrace what life has to offer and explore new possibilities. \*\*\*\*\*

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** An emotional challenge will resolve if you are willing to compromise. Do whatever it takes to keep the peace, but don't sell yourself short or let anyone take advantage of your kindness. Partnerships will require boundaries, equality and understanding to reach your expectations. \*\*\*

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** Stop worrying and start doing what's necessary to make a difference. Step outside your comfort zone in order to find an alternative route. Refuse to let anyone pick a fight with you. Don't engage in unrealistic ventures or discussions that lead nowhere. \*\*\*

**Birthday Baby:** You are optimistic, novel and enthusiastic. You are generous and entertaining.

☉: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☿: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼: Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

5 1 6 4 3 9 6 1 2 7 9 1 5 4 3 2 7 8 1 9 4 3 2 7 8 1 9 6 7 4 5 1 2 3 6 9 7 1 4 5 3 6

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Friday's Answer

3 8 9 1 5 4 6 2 7 2 6 5 7 9 8 4 1 3 1 7 4 6 2 3 5 9 8 8 3 2 4 7 6 1 5 9 9 4 1 3 8 5 7 6 2 7 5 6 9 1 2 3 8 4 6 9 7 2 3 1 8 4 5 5 1 3 8 4 9 2 7 6 4 2 8 5 6 7 9 3 1

Difficulty: ★ 3-6 ©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

CAN'T WAIT UNTIL THIS SNOW SELTS Solution: 6 letters

D R O P S E V O L G A R D E N E E R U T A R E P M E T M O A L L T O O U T D O O R A S S M C G C I A F O O R E E A S P W Y P N I C D D E E R E T P L O C O E I C X V S T S O R M A N C N W R T I E S M H T C O Y S H D L E R N I K M H T C S A Q I I I T R D A O O O O K S W U P U F A E L U L I D O S O E I M Q E W F N I N P L B L L V R U I A W T D W N G C P I B I R N L O A A A B E A C H A R R E K N I Y L F R E T T U B R D L S N O W P L O W G N I T A K S

© 2023 Andrews McMeel Syndication www.wonderword.com 3/6 Beach, Birds, Bloom, Blossom, Boots, Butterfly, Chipmunks, Cold, Cycle, Deer, Driveway, Drops, Excited, Garden, Gloves, Holiday, Icicle, Lawn, Liquid, Mountain, New Life, Outdoor, Park, Planting, Play, Pond, River, Road, Roof, Season, Sidewalk, Skating, Snowflakes, Snowman, Snow Plow, Squirrels, Storm, Stream, Temperature, Trees, Trucks, Water Last Friday's Answer: The Gant The NEW Volume 70 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.



# 76ers rally to end Bucks' winning streak at 16



**MILWAUKEE** (AP)—Joel Embiid made a go-ahead 3-pointer with 41.4 seconds left and the Philadelphia 76ers ended Milwaukee's winning streak at 16, beating the Bucks the 133-130 on Saturday night.

Milwaukee had the longest winning streak in the NBA since the Phoenix Suns had 18 straight victories early last season.

The 76ers trailed 125-121 before James Harden, who scored 38 points, hit a 3-pointer with 1:21 left. After Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo missed a shot from around the basket, Embiid sank a 3-pointer that gave Philadelphia its first lead of the second half.

After Jrue Holiday missed a 3-point attempt with 25 seconds remaining, the 76ers went 6 of 6 from the line the rest of the way.

Harden added 10 assists and nine rebounds. Embiid had 31 points, 10 assists and six rebounds. Tyrese Maxey had 26 points.

Antetokounmpo had 34 points and 13 rebounds for Milwaukee. Brook Lopez and Holiday added 26 points apiece.

## CAVALIERS 114, PISTONS 90

**CLEVELAND** (AP)—Darius Garland had 21 points and seven assists, Donovan Mitchell scored 20 points and Cleve-



Philadelphia 76ers' Joel Embiid (21) reacts after making a basket during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Milwaukee Bucks, Saturday, March 4, 2023, in Milwaukee.

land routed Detroit.

Evan Mobley had 16 points, 11 rebounds, six assists and four blocked shots, Jarrett Allen scored 15 points and Caris LeVert had 11. The Cavaliers are fourth in the Eastern Conference with 16 games left.

All-Star starter Mitchell, who sprained a finger on his

left hand in the third quarter, and Garland only played 24 minutes apiece as the Cavaliers swept the four-game season series with Detroit. The Pistons were held below 95 points in each.

Cleveland is 40-26 and leads surging New York by 1 1/2 games for home-court

advantage in the first round of the playoffs.

Marvin Bagley III had 20 points and 13 rebounds for Detroit. The Pistons have the second-worst record in the NBA at 15-49. They have lost seven straight overall and seven in a row on the road.

## ROCKETS 122, SPURS 110

**SAN ANTONIO** (AP)—Tari Eason matched his season high with 20 points and Houston ended an 11-game losing streak, beating San Antonio.

Alperen Sengun had 16 points and K.J. Martin and Josh Christopher each added 14 points for the Rockets in the opener of a home-and-home series. Last in the NBA at 14-49, they hadn't won since Feb. 1.

Devonte' Graham had 28 points to lead San Antonio.

The teams will play again Sunday night in Houston to close a back-to-back set.

## TIMBERWOLVES 138, KINGS 134

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** (AP)—Anthony Edwards scored 27 points and Minnesota beat Sacramento to snap the Kings' winning streak at five games.

Edwards added eight assists to help Minnesota win its third straight. Mike Conley scored 24 points and made two free throws with 15.7 seconds left to extend the lead to four. Jaden McDaniels added 19 points, and Kyle Anderson nearly had a triple-double with 18 points, nine assists and seven rebounds.

Kevin Huerter scored 29 points for Sacramento (37-26). De'Aaron Fox had 25 points and seven assists, and Domantas Sabonis had

24 points, 14 rebounds and five assists.

## HEAT 117, HAWKS 109

**MIAMI** (AP)—Bam Adebayo scored 30 points and Miami held Trae Young to a season-low eight points in a victory over Atlanta.

Tyler Herro added 20 points, and Jimmy Butler and Caleb Martin finished with 15 apiece for the Heat. They extended their lead over the Hawks to 1 1/2 games for seventh in the Eastern Conference.

Young was 2 for 13 from the field. Saddiq Bey had 22 points for Atlanta. The Hawks are 1-2 under new coach Quin Snyder.

## RAPTORS 116, WIZARDS 109, OT

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Fred VanVleet made two 3-pointers in overtime and had 25 points to help Toronto beat Washington for a two-game split.

Gary Trent Jr. scored 26 points for the Raptors, and VanVleet had 10 assists. Toronto rebounded from a 119-108 loss Thursday night to move back ahead of the Wizards into ninth place in the Eastern Conference.

Kristaps Porzingis had 22 points and 11 rebounds for the Wizards. Bradley Beal added 21 points and 10 assists, but shot just 7 for 22 and missed a jumper that could have won it in regulation.

By **TIM REYNOLDS**  
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

Ja Morant will be away from the Memphis Grizzlies for at least their next two games, the team announced Saturday, not long after the NBA opened an investigation into a social media post by the guard, who livestreamed himself holding what appeared to be a gun at a nightclub.

Morant said in a statement distributed through the agency that represents him that he takes "full responsibility" for his actions and that he was going to "take some time away to get help."

The video was streamed by Morant on his Instagram page early Saturday, hours after the Grizzlies played in Denver. They were flying to Los Angeles on Saturday for games against the Clippers on Sunday and the Lakers on Tuesday.

Morant will miss those two games, at minimum, the Grizzlies said, without further comment.

"We are aware of a social media post involving Ja Morant and are investigating," NBA spokesman Mike Bass said earlier Saturday.

## Ja Morant says he'll get help after video shows apparent gun

The league will try to speak with Morant as part of that investigation, though it is unclear when any meeting may occur. Morant apologized in a statement released by Tandem Sports + Entertainment.

"I take full responsibility for my actions last night," Morant said. "I'm sorry to my family, teammates, coaches, fans, partners, the city of Memphis and the entire Grizzlies organization for letting you down. I'm going to take some time away to get help and work on learning better methods of dealing with stress and my overall well-being."

It was not immediately clear what Morant meant by "help" or if he planned to be away from the team for longer than the two-game minimum announced by the Grizzlies.

The league, if it finds wrongdoing, could fine or suspend Morant. Based on the Grizzlies' statement, the earliest Morant could play is Thursday at home against Golden State. His Instagram and Twitter accounts were disabled shortly after the Griz-

zlies announced his absence.

Memphis is currently No. 2 in the Western Conference standings, led by Morant, a two-time All-Star averaging 27.1 points and 8.2 assists per game.

This is at least the second time in the last few weeks that Morant has been the subject of a league investigation. Morant's actions were investigated after a Jan. 29 incident in Memphis that he said led to a friend of his being banned from home games for a year.

That incident followed a game against the Indiana Pacers; citing unnamed sources, The Indianapolis Star and USA Today reported that multiple members of the Pacers saw a red dot pointed at them, and The Athletic reported that a Pacers security guard believed the laser was attached to a gun.

The NBA confirmed that unnamed individuals were banned from the arena but said its investigation found no evidence that anyone was threatened with a weapon.

Morant responded to that

incident by tweeting that the reports "paint this negative image on me and my fam. & banned my brother from home games for a year. unbelievable." During the Jan. 29 game, there was barking between Pacers players and friends of Morant seated along the sideline. A close friend of Morant's, Davonte Pack, was escorted from the arena as Pacers bench players shouted in Pack's direction.

Pack and Morant also are involved in a civil lawsuit brought after an incident at Morant's home this past summer, in which a 17-year-old alleged that they assaulted him. The Shelby County district attorney's office said in January that it was "aware of the incident, and after careful review of the facts, decided that there was not enough evidence to proceed with a case."

There is precedent for the NBA when sanctioning a player over conduct involving guns. In January 2010, then-Commissioner David Stern suspended Washington's Gilbert Arenas indefinitely with-

out pay after saying the player's behavior made him "not currently fit to take the court."

The suspension followed Arenas getting photographed before a game in Philadelphia playfully pointing his index fingers in a gun imitation at his teammates while he was under investigation by federal and local authorities after admittedly bringing guns into the Wizards' locker room.

Arenas ultimately missed 50 games, the rest of the 2009-10 season.

Morant, the No. 2 pick in the 2019 NBA draft, has become a full-fledged superstar. His five-year, \$194 million extension with the Grizzlies kicks in to start next season and would rise to about \$230 million if he makes an All-NBA team this season.

He also is a sought-after endorser. On Christmas, Nike unveiled Morant's first signature shoe, which is set to be released in the coming weeks. And earlier this week, Powerade announced a multiyear endorsement deal with Morant.

On the same day the Powerade deal was revealed, The Washington Post published a story, based on police records it obtained, detailing how Morant and some associates "have been accused of threatening and even violent behavior," the newspaper said.

The questions about Morant's conduct come at a time when gun violence again is a prominent talking point in the sports world.

Top NBA draft prospect Brandon Miller and his Alabama teammate Jaden Bradley, by courtroom revelations, have been linked to the scene of a killing. Neither has been charged or accused of a crime, but then-teammate Darius Miles and another man are facing capital murder charges.

And New Mexico State's men's basketball season was shut down in February because of a fatal shooting and allegations of locker-room hazing. Mike Peake, the New Mexico State player implicated in the shooting death of New Mexico player Brandon Travis in November, said he was acting in self-defense and has not been charged with a crime.



# MLB pitchers adjusting to quick pace of new pitch clock



**J U P I -  
TER, Fla.  
( A P ) —  
There's**

a lot that Marlins ace Sandy Alcantara likes about Major League Baseball's new rules, such as the limitation on in-field shifts.

"Last year I got so mad sometimes because they move the position player and the ball was right there," the NL Cy Young Award winner said.

One of the biggest ways the sport is addressing its slowly moving product is the introduction of a pitch clock. Pitchers now get 15 seconds between deliveries if there's no runner on base, 20 seconds if someone is aboard. And it's 30 seconds to resume play between batters.

The pitch clock will take some getting used to, Alcantara said, though he's not too worried about the adjustment because he's used to working pretty quickly. But working with the new pitch timer in spring training has taken more energy out of him than he expected.

"Especially when it's hot like today," Alcantara said after pitching two innings against the New York Mets in Jupiter, Florida, where temperatures were in the upper 80s. "I mean, I was trying to take my time because I was getting tired when I throw pitch by pitch by pitch."

That's an early adjustment that many pitchers are grappling with. Most have been pleased with the faster pace of play, which has dropped from 3 hours, 1 minute last spring to 2:39. The Mets beat the Marlins 8-4 Wednesday in 2:37.

But with less time between innings and pitches, players have expressed worries about rushing, as some are getting winded from running back and forth after certain plays.

"Kind of tough to get your breath after backing up third base and you know you only have 25, 30 seconds to get back on the mound," Miami left-hander Jesús Luzardo said.

After about a week of spring training, pitch clock violations are being called at a rate of 1.63 per game.

Already, it's become a new sign of the times in baseball — an umpire pointing to his wrist, indicating a pitcher dawdled too long.

Mets ace Max Scherzer, who is eagerly testing the range of what's allowed, was called for a balk after going too quickly. New York Yankees reliever Wandy Peralta, meanwhile, recorded a three-pitch strikeout in a lightning-fast 20 seconds.

Marlins manager Skip Schumaker likened the new pace to conditioning in the

weight room.

"You lift the most weight when you have a little bit of rest," he said. "If you're maxing out, you're waiting a couple of minutes before your next rep. If you're not conditioned, that next rep isn't as good as the first rep. That goes with pitching, too. How sharp are you going to be if you're not conditioned?"

"Going behind home plate, backing up third, sprinting to first, all that is real. How about covering first base in St. Louis in July when it's 110 degrees and it's the sixth inning and you're 85 pitches in?"

As for other instances when pitchers could be winded, Schumaker said it could come into play when relievers enter from the bullpen.

"Colorado is my concern," he said. "It's at altitude and it's in right-center-field, and when you're running in from there, you're pretty tired. I wonder what that looks like."

Miami reliever Matt Barnes wondered if the shorter time between innings will tempt pitchers to throw fewer warmup pitches.

"Say you've got a long run in in Chicago. It's April 15 and it's 30 degrees out, and you get out there," Barnes said. "Are



Kansas City Royals Nick Wittgren throws before a pitch clock runs down during the fifth inning of a spring training baseball game against the Texas Rangers Friday, Feb. 24, 2024, in Surprise, Ariz.

they going to say you have one more (warmup pitch) or you're going to throw a ball, and you only get four pitches, and now you're risking injury?"

Arizona left-hander Joe Mantiply was assessed an automatic ball in a game against the Cubs because he didn't finish his warmup pitches

quickly enough after entering as a reliever.

"We're trying to train for it," Detroit Tigers manager A.J. Hinch said. "Everything that

we're doing off the mound we are doing with a clock. So, bullpens, lives (live batting practice), obviously the games, we're going to make sure that these guys get used to pitching at the pace in which they're going to have to pitch."

Cardinals reliever Jordan Hicks said he could see pitchers becoming winded in certain situations.

"When I ran in last year from the bullpen — that's pretty far — and I'd throw all my (warmup) pitches, I'd be out of breath without the pitch clock."

Known for his blazing fastball, Hicks said he has thought about ways of slowing things down this season.

One option, he said, is to back away and use one of his step-offs to catch his breath. Under the new rules, pitchers can disengage from the rubber — either to call timeout or to attempt a pickoff throw — twice per plate appearance.

"You could walk around the grass and grab the rosin. I'm sure if it gets too deliberate, where they say, 'Oh, you're avoiding the rules,' then they'll probably say something. But if you're quick about, that's an extra three seconds right there."

## 'Every number is good': Analytics helping speed up baseball

By **JIMMY GOLEN**  
AP SPORTS WRITER

Robot umpires. A strike zone that looks more like a stop sign than a rectangle. Allowing the batter to take off for first base on any pitch, not just a dropped third strike.

With the new pitch clock speeding up the sport, baseball's brain trust already is trying to figure out what might come next in its efforts to make games more exciting and keep them moving along.

And the people running the sport are using the same kind of number-crunching analytics that caused the problem to solve the problem.

"This is Phase One. There probably is more coming," Major League Baseball executive vice president Morgan Sword said Friday at the MIT Sloan School Sports Analytics Conference. "But with every single one of these things, we've always tried to (ask): 'Is this a reasonable change that baseball fans are going to support, or are we veering toward something that's not baseball any more?'"

"It's a very subjective skill," Sword said. "There's lots of things that would work that would just irritate people too much to make it worth it."

The MIT conference began in 2007 as a small gathering

of stat nerds who believed they had found a better way to measure everything from free agent signings to when to go for it on fourth down. It's now a 2,200-person conclave that fills a downtown convention center with powerful people.

Over the years, some of the strategies the statisticians came up with to help a team win also changed the nature of games. In basketball, that meant players attempting 3-pointers at unprecedented rate; in baseball, it led to a game that has gotten longer and more boring.

The average time of a nine-inning game has stretched from 2 hours, 30 minutes in the mid-1950s to 2:46 in 1989 and 3:10 in 2021.

Statistics pioneer Bill James said "it's past time" for those running the national pastime to fight back. And he praised them for using the nerds' own numbers to do it.

"In a sense, the game is a war between the front offices, who are trying to figure out a way to make the game slow and boring, and (league officials) who are trying to figure out a way to make it fast and exciting," he said.

"We have some very intelligent adversaries in that war," Sword replied.

Sword said the com-

missioner's office worked backward from surveys that showed fans want more action and less time waiting for events to happen. MLB tested dozens of possible solutions in the minor leagues during the past two years and some proved impractical.

"Many of them wound up on the cutting room floor," he said.

Future changes would be designed to increase batting averages and cut down on strikeouts that reached a historic high in 2021: The majors are whiffing at a rate higher than batters facing Hall of Famer Sandy Koufax.

"We're rushing to get stuff done that should have been done 30 years ago," James said on the conference's baseball rules panel. "And let's get on with it."

Moving fences back would increase batting averages, but it would be expensive and in some ballparks impractical. James mentioned that short home runs down the line used to be a double; that one is also unlikely to be brought back. Changes in equipment and playing surfaces have also been discussed.

Sword said he wants the dropped third strike rule extended to all pitches, but conceded: "Nobody likes that except for me."

James also suggested "adding sides" to the current rectangular strike zone to exclude hard-to-hit pitches at the corners. Most umpires are already adjusting for this, unofficially and perhaps unintentionally.

It would be possible to implement with the automated umpires being used in Triple-A this season. The robo-umps could be in the majors as early as next season, but Sword said "all the strike zones we are testing are rectangular."

The solutions that did stick came in three categories: Rules to speed up the game, most notably a timer that limits the wait between pitches; restrictions on defensive shifting; and bigger bases, to make it slightly easier to steal bases.

"Maybe I would have stolen six bases instead of five," said Raúl Ibañez, who actually stole 50 bases in a major league career with five teams that stretched over 19 seasons and is now a baseball VP.

The results after almost a week of spring training: Game times are down about 24 minutes from last year's Grapefruit and Cactus Leagues. Violations in which the umpire awards an automatic ball or strike are being called at a rate of 1.63 per game, compared to 1.7 when it was tested in the minor

leagues last year.

Once minor league players adjusted, there was a call about every other game, Sword said. That's happening at spring training, too.

"Players are adapting right now," Ibañez said. "We're already seeing it in the data. At the major league level, these are the best athletes in the world, and they're the most adaptable."

New rules always create the possibility of unintended consequences.

That's where the analytics come in.

Sword said the data from minor league tryouts—including A-B testing where they were used in some games but not others—gives baseball the confidence things won't go awry.

"We knew with historic precision what was going to happen this spring in a way that we never would have in the old days," Sword said, adding that batting averages and runs scored per game are also up. "Right now, every number is good."

When the timer was used in the minor leagues, pitchers worried that rushing would cause more injuries; Sword said injuries were down. Ibañez said players told him they feel less worn down after the shorter games, a bonus that could add up after a 162-game season.



# Ayuyus undefeated heading into HS caging playoffs

By LEIGH GASES

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REPORTER

The Kagman High School Ayuyus swept all their games in the regular season for an undefeated campaign in the 2022-2023 IT&E Interscholastic Boys High School Basketball League.

Heading into the championship tournament set to begin on March 16, the Ayuyus handed the erstwhile undefeated Marianas High School Dolphins their only loss in the league last Friday at the MHS Gymnasium.

It was a low-scoring game with a final score of 39-29—unlike previous ones as their defenses were as hot as their win streaks—with fouls



LEIGH GASES  
In this file photo, Kagman High School's Frankie Satur goes for a lay up against a Saipan International School basketball player in the 2022-2023 IT&E Interscholastic Boys High School Basketball League played at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

made left and right.

The Ayuyus were fouled back to back with half of their points made in the first half through free throws. Frankie Satur, who is a beast on the offense and defense, had a tough time making shots as he was tightly guarded by the Dolphins.

Nevertheless, Satur zigged while they zagged and still scored the second highest in the team with 9 points. Teammate Anthony Dikito led the Ayuyus with 11 points as the Dolphins were limited to just 13 points in the first half.

The Dolphins' Airson Atan and Khristian David tried to put in the work offensively with 9

and 8 points apiece, but were stopped dead in their tracks by a more aggressive defense of the Ayuyus.



Aiden Norita contributed 4 in the Dolphins' quest for the W but it was not enough as the Ayuyus pulled further ahead in the last minutes of the game.

In the end, the Ayuyus' Alejandro Ortiz had 8 markers, Lucio Aldan made 7, and Nobet Hocog scored 4.

The other varsity game of the night was won by Agape Christian School, 56-36, over Grace Christian Academy. There were no junior varsity games that night.

In last Wednesday's games,

the Mount Carmel School varsity team blew through Saipan International School, 48-30. In the JV games, MHS won against KHS, 30-24 and Saipan Southern High School defeated MCS, 23-9.

In the varsity standings, MHS is right behind KHS with a 5-1 card; SSHS is 4-2; MCS is at 4-3; ACS is 3-4; SIS is 1-6; and Grace Christian Academy is 0-7.

In the junior varsity standings, MHS JV is undefeated with 9 wins; SSHS is at 6-4; KHS is 5-3; MHS JV-2 is 3-5; MCS JV has yet to win with seven losses; Rota is at 1-1; and Tinian is at 2 losses.

The double-elimination championship tournament is scheduled for Thursday, March 13, starting at 4:45pm, continues the next day at the same time, then the finals starts at 8:30am on Saturday, March 18.

**KHS** – Dikito 11, Satur 9, Ortiz 8, Aldan 7, Hocog 4.

**MHS** – Atan 9, David 8, Norita 4, Licayan 2, Lucas 2, Viana 2, Johnny 2.

**Scoring by halves:** 19-13; 39-29.

## Slots still available for NMC Foundation's Golf Open

Golfers who are looking for a chance to win amazing prizes can still enter in the Northern Marianas College Foundation's upcoming Golf Open on March 18 and 19. Online registration is available by accessing [www.marianas.edu/golf](http://www.marianas.edu/golf).

For the first time, NMC's tournament will be a two-day event and will be held on the east and west Courses of the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort. The tournament fee for the 2023 golf open is \$250. First place winners in the Men's Championship, A, B, C, Se-

nior, and Ladies flights will each receive \$500. Second place finishers will receive \$300 and third place finishers will receive \$200.

This year's tournament will feature thousands of dollars in amazing hole-in-one prizes, such as a brand new 2023 Toyota 4Runner SR5 from Atkins Kroll Saipan, a brand new 2023 Hyundai IONIQ 5 SEL with Navigation and AWD and a brand new 2023 Mitsubishi Out-

lander from Triple J Motors, a brand new 2023 Nissan Rogue from Joeten Motors, a \$10,000 shopping spree at Top Shelf Wine and Spirits, \$10,000 from Ambyth Shipping and Seafix Inc., \$5,000 from Pacifica Insurance, \$3,000 from McDonald's of Saipan, and a YETI cooler from Boarderline.

The tournament, which is the signature event of the NMC Foundation, aims to raise funds for the college for its rebuild-

ing and reconstruction efforts. Despite the devastation and destruction of super typhoon Soudelor and Yutu, the college has been aggressively seeking funds from all available sources to rebuild classrooms, offices, labs, and workforce spaces for the CNMI community. The Foundation is seeking the CNMI private sector's support through fundraising events like the golf tournament.

Interested companies and individuals who would like to help the college with its rebuilding efforts can donate

educational tax credit, cash, or in-kind contributions by visiting [www.marianas.edu/golf](http://www.marianas.edu/golf) or by contacting NMC Foundation coordinator Carla Sablan at [carla.sablan@marianas.edu](mailto:carla.sablan@marianas.edu) or (670) 237-6780.

For more updates, follow Northern Marianas College on Facebook and Instagram ([nmc.proa](https://www.facebook.com/nmc.proa)) or visit [www.marianas.edu](http://www.marianas.edu). (PR)

## AFC

From Page 20

to bring development to our programs. NMI soccer continues to grow so we at NMIFA need to keep up with the trend and do our best for our soccer community."

The seminar, according to the NMIFA official, had both newcomers and experienced match commissioners, who needed to undergo re-evaluation.

While Zapanta is in Thailand, the NMI U20 Women's National Soccer Team is in

Palestine and is competing in the AFC U20 Asian Cup Qualifiers from March 10 to March 12.

There are eight groups in the qualifiers and the top finisher in each group will advance to the 2024 AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup to be hosted by Uzbekistan in March 2024.

The Asian Football Confederation is the governing body of association football, beach football, and futsal in some countries/territories in Asia and Oceania. It has 47 member countries, most of which are located in Asia.

## NMIBF

From Page 20

months had undergone extensive renovation with help from the Northern Marianas Sports Association. It now boasts of new bleachers, flooring, basketball goals, and for the first time since it was built, the facility is now fully air-conditioned.

Initial plans call for the "Ultra Cup" to kick off in mid-April with 14 teams duking it out not only for a year's worth of bragging rights but a handsome championship cash prize as well.

Lee said teams can enlist a maximum of 14 players and the 14 teams will be grouped into two pools of seven and will battle it out in a single-round elimination format.

The Top 4 teams in each pool will then advance to the

playoffs where it will be single elimination and the winner takes all the prize money.

Lee, who is Beverage and Tobacco manager at MARPAC, said while he won't exactly divulge the championship purse yet, he did promise that "participating teams and fans won't be disappointed."

While he'd rather keep some of the "Ultra Cup" details closer to his vest, Lee did divulge that NMIBF will be naming the league's MVP the Uncle Paul Shimizu MVP Award.

Shimizu was not only one of MARPAC's owners, but also was a former Guam national basketball player, gold medalist, and national coach.

Shimizu, who passed away in March 2021, was the youngest of four siblings born to Ambrosio Shimizu, the founder of Ambrosio, Inc., which owns MARPAC.

## JAPANESE

From Page 20

Okayama University of Science, and Kyoto University of Foreign Studies) will take part in this year's program that will run from March 5 to 10.

The Marianas Visitors Authority welcomed the visiting group and reiterated the importance of sports tourism in the NMI.

"Sports tourism is an important niche market that the MVA targets, as the beautiful scenery of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are suitable year-round for the many athletic events that we organize or support. In particular, the publicity and promotion involving international athletes and teams in The Marianas help us gain worldwide media coverage in a cost-efficient manner. These athletes also include the many golfers and divers who favor our destination. Sports tourism contributes to our economy and provides opportunities for residents to participate in or volunteer for these events, as well as have intercultural exchange with our visitors," MVA acting managing director Judy Torres said.

Students from UNGL are returning to Saipan after not making the trip to the island

in the last two years due to the pandemic. They flew through a direct flight service from Japan, which was made available again in September last year—a key step in revitalizing the Japan market. Direct flights between Saipan and Japan paved the way for numerous Japanese pro teams to hold training camps on the island before with several squads staying for nearly a month. Students, like those under the UNGL program, also had frequent visits to Saipan when direct flights were made available.

"While this will be the first trip to Saipan for most of the students, the UNGL Leadership Challenge on Saipan program itself is in its 11th iteration (including two online exchanges during the pandemic), beginning in 2014. The last time we visited Saipan for this program was in February 2020," professor Keiji Hata said.

The students from UNGL also participated in a series of friendlies against NMI players during their 2020 visit before pandemic hit and prevented them from returning to Saipan. The Japanese are the first batch of tourists that will engage in sports activities in the islands this year. In June, NMI's sports tourism is expected to get a boost with the arrival of athletes that will

compete in two badminton Olympic qualifiers and two Oceania region athletics meets

Hata said that the group is excited to play against the NMI's select players and gauge the hosts' skill level. He added that besides the friendlies, the Japanese students will participate in other programs with the different schools in the islands. They will spend time at DanDan Middle School, San Vicente Elementary School, Francisco M. Sablan Middle School, William S. Reyes Elementary School, and the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School.

Hata believes UNGL's sports activities and other parts of the program will help strengthen the ties between the NMI and Japan.

"We hope that the students will learn that the relationship between the NMI and Japan today was built by our predecessors, and therefore, the actions they take now will directly lead to the relationship between the NMI and Japan in the next generation. We hope that this will help to further strengthen the relationship between the two.

Meanwhile, Northern Marianas Islands Football Association technical director Michiteru Mita is pleased that UNGL has decided to return to Saipan





76ers rally to end Bucks' winning streak at 16

PAGE 17

# Saipan Tribune Sports

Ayuyus undefeated heading into HS caging playoffs

PAGE 19



20 MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2023

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

## Japanese play friendlies vs NMI players



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
The visiting Japanese group and NMI players and coaches gather for a group photo after their friendly matches.

College students from the University Network for Global Leadership Development are back on Saipan and will be battling NMI players in a series of friendlies.

UNGL is an organization made up of 20 universities in western Japan with members collaborating to plan and implement training programs in their country and abroad to develop university students' leadership and related skills, knowledge, and mindsets.



NMI's girls U17 and co-ed U14 players on March 6 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville is part of the visiting group's nearly week-long activities on Saipan. Twenty-five students and eight faculty members from three universities (Ehime University, See JAPANESE on Page 19



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Students and faculty members under the Japan's University Network for Global Leadership Development huddle before playing in friendlies at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville in 2020.

### NMIBF to revive men's island-wide league

By MARK RABAGO  
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After more than a decade, the Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation will be reviving what used to be the Budweiser Cup Men's Island-Wide Basketball League.

NMIBF president James Lee said like previous renditions of the Bud Cup, the league will crown the best men's open team in the CNMI.

However, there will be a name change as Budweiser

has given way to Michelob Ultra as the main sponsor of the competition.

"There are many reasons for bringing back the men's island-wide basketball league. But the main reason is this was always been the signature basketball league everyone would look forward to before and so what better time to revive it with a new facility at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium," said Lee.

The Ada Gym in recent See NMIBF on Page 19



## AFC appoints Russelle Zapanta as match commissioner

By LEIGH GASES  
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REPORTER

Northern Mariana Islands Football Association executive director Russelle Zapanta is the first person from the CNMI named as one of Asian Football Confederation's match commissioners.

The AFC appointed Zapanta as a match commissioner for the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup 2024 Qualifiers for Group E in Buriram, Thailand and left last Saturday.

Zapanta was first named a match commissioner for the 2020/2021 AFC Match Commissioners panel after he completed and passed tests at the AFC Match Commissioner Seminar in July 2019.

He was appointed but could not initially go due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a team



NMIFA

Northern Mariana Islands Football Association executive director Russelle Zapanta is CNMI's first match commissioner in the Asian Football Confederation. He is a match commissioner for the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup 2024 Qualifiers for Group E in Buriram, Thailand and left last Saturday.

dropped out, but the schedule was eventually set for him to leave.

As a match commissioner,

he is responsible for overseeing the technical organization of a match and compliance with the applicable

regulations.

He said that being appointed a match commissioner to represent AFC and the CNMI is an honor but at the same time holds a lot of responsibility as "we are tasked to make sure the competition rolls out as smoothly as possible."

"Also, this opportunity goes to show that despite our nations' size and short soccer history, there are other ways our people can shine and represent the NMI on the Asian and/or global soccer scene outside of playing and coaching," said Zapanta.

Zapanta is excited to watch the soccer matches in his group which has Thailand, Chinese Taipei, and Tajikistan, but "I look forward to learning from the experience and the networking with counterparts I meet so that I can bring it back to the NMI and continue

See AFC on Page 19



NMIBF

CNMI national men's team member Eli Aughenbaugh goes up for a layup in this file photo from a recent basketball league.